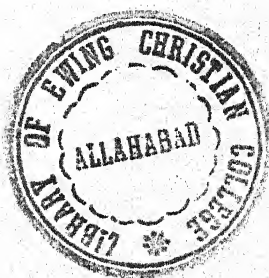


The
BEST YEARS



Other Books by
Walter B. Pitkin

LIFE BEGINS AT FORTY
MORE POWER TO YOU
CAREERS AFTER FORTY
ON MY OWN

The
BEST YEARS

HOW TO ENJOY RETIREMENT

BY

WALTER B. PITKIN



New York

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Dedication

To

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Whose genius was surpassed only by his good sense, which he never used to better advantage than on the day, midway in his long career, when he retired from business and forsook the mere making of a livelihood for the greater art of living.

In his first forty-two years of earning bread and butter, he learned that man does not live by bread alone: so he left the bread line at the peak of his powers and turned to the things that matter.

Men have forgotten the first half of his life. The world will never forget the second. He remains forever the unattainable ideal of all of us lesser folk who strive to make the most of

THE BEST YEARS.

Preface

"**S**ORRY, but we have never investigated the matter. We do; however, know a man who . . ."

"This is important. We want to hear your report. But we have nothing to give you."

"I have heard of several cases, but I know of no serious investigation."

"Whatever you find will help us deal more intelligently with our pensioners."

Thus wrote the officials of about a hundred large corporations, employing nearly five million workers. Thus wrote also nearly as many friends, whose wide experience made me think they might know something about the adjustments men and women make after they retire from their lifework.

Everybody agreed that nobody had looked into the matter. Everybody agreed upon the urgency of an inquiry. Everybody agreed too that mere pep talks are worthless. We must have facts.

I sought them. I found many. I missed many more. Here is a frontier. Nobody knows much about it. Travelers bring in strange tales. Myths abound. It is far easier to get lost in the thickets than to come out into the clear. But, as with all frontiers, the only thing to do is to plunge in and hack your way as best you can.

Nobody gave me much. Many gave me each a little, so

many will be credited in a small way. This must not be taken to mean ingratitude. I am thankful to all friends and acquaintances for what they could chip in. They gave their all. Who could do more?

WALTER B. PITKIN

Santa Barbara, California

February 1, 1946

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The
BEST YEARS

Why Not?

WHY not quit and have a good time? You've got the money. Six out of every ten dollars are in the pockets or banks of people older than fifty. Three out of every ten of you are independently well-to-do. You can retire if you wish, so far as money goes. And you can have a good time too, if you are smart enough.

Yes, if you are smart enough. But are you? Now that I don't know.

You've worked long enough. You started soon after twenty and have been plugging right up to now. Say some forty-five years. You don't tackle the old office desk quite so briskly as you did of old. Now and then, as you sign a check, you see green fields and brooks, with small boys fishing under the shade of the sycamores. And you wonder. Yes, you wonder.

You learned enough to know that you'd like to learn more about this big world, not in the hurly-burly of the day's grind, but from a steamer deck or from a plane or in a rickshaw, without anything to rush you.

You're healthy enough. Sound of wind and strong of limb. Able to take four flights of stairs if you have to. (But let's hope the elevator is running.)

You're free enough too, at last. Children all grown up and gone away, the youngest to college and the oldest to a fine job in New York. You and your wife are free to lock

up the house tomorrow morning, fill up the tank of the old car, and float away. Whither? You're free to say.

Well?

It's smart to cut loose. Are you smart enough? It takes courage to find yourself and to live your own life, after all the years of slavery. Have you the guts?

Show me.

While you're making up your mind, I'll show you something. It will change your decision, at least a little. I shall show you something too new for newspapers. Newspapers report events. But this is not an event. It is a trend. A trend is something like an egg one week warm in an incubator: it is neither egg nor chick, but something on its way to becoming something.

Something is happening today. It seems, at its present stage, to be fully as important as atom shattering. What will come of it all? Well, what will happen to the incubator egg? Will a chick peck its way out, or will a snake emerge and hiss at us? Will the egg be addled, or will somebody ruin it by dropping it? Who knows? All we dare say right now is that the possibilities of this trend stagger the imagination.

You want to quit and have a good time. Well, you may make the dream come true, but perhaps in a way that has never yet occurred to you. Your thoughts about retiring are old. They could not be young, for you came into this world many years ago, didn't you? You watched the elders, when you were very young. You listened to table talk about retired people. What you now think about your own retiring is largely what you began learning forty, fifty, or sixty years ago. Yes, old, old thoughts. So you are going to be surprised. We hope pleasantly.

You may close your office, jump into your car, and roll away to green fields. But what next? Well, that is our story.

Good News

THIS is the first book to be written on the fifth of the five most important phases of man's life. It shows people how to pass from the fourth to the fifth phase and how to make the ensuing years the best of all.

The first phase is coming to life. The second is growing up. The third is reproduction. The fourth is making a living. The fifth is living one's own life. Students have long toiled over the first four. How is it that they have overlooked or avoided the fifth? You will get the answer as you read this book. It is both amusing and enlightening. It also discloses startling news.

For the first time in the million or more years of man's struggles to establish himself, it is now becoming possible for millions of people to live their own lives with zest, and not for a day or two, but for years and years. No book like this could have been written a century ago. (Or, if it had been written, the Brothers Grimm would have been the authors.) Men had gained mastery over few things, least of all over themselves. They did not make events. Events made them. Lincoln's thought reflected a world of truth. A million lesser life forms preyed upon the embryo in the womb, the babe in diapers, the romping boy, the panting youth, the lustful damsel, the sweating peasant, his overworked woman, the harried trader, the scribbling clerk, the

gouty judge, and the drunken king. What bacteria missed, stupidity caught. And so what might have been midway became terminus. There were, for the masses, not five phases of life. There were four—and sudden death.

Then, too, making a living wore men and women down early, for they had little power beyond their own muscles. They had not yet fully learned how to enslave the molecule and the atom. They had made a fair beginning, but it was not enough. Toilers still shattered their bodies long before the age of fifty. Miners were done for at thirty-five. Sailors around forty. The long-lived were those who did not use their brawn; they were professors and ministers and judges.

Only of late has life's fifth phase become long and fruitful. So now it is worth writing books around its new problems. It is a field for pioneers. It is packed with surprises, most of them pleasant. But it also calls for hard thinking and perhaps even harder readjustments on the part of many people. Those who yearn to be forever twenty-one need courage beyond their years. Those who are sure the atomic bomb has ended everything must start all over again. The Best Years do not lie on the embryonic side of twenty-one. And the world is not coming to an end tomorrow at 11:42 A.M. if it doesn't rain.

The Best Years come after fifty. They are best in the highest sense, not in the lowest. Count that man unfortunate who understands only the worst kinds of best. He has never grown up. Though he be bank president and forty-four, he is still baby. And he will probably suffer the usual fate of his kind. He will pass from da da to dodo in a twinkling, on the day he retires from the presidency. Being baby, he will be unable to live his own life; and so he will stop living. Funeral Thursday noon. Please omit flowers.

Many hard-working people slave along for half a century, build up a stack of bank deposits and war bonds, add

a wing to their mansions for a new billiard room and guest bedrooms, in order to stop work one day and, as they like to tell their friends, enjoy life. Most of them dry up and blow away before the painters have finished decorating the new billiard room!

Such people commit many errors. They have misconceived the art of living. Blame them not, for they grew up in a world that did not understand the fifth phase of life. The older they are, the less they understand. The younger they are, the easier the following pages will be under their eyes. To this broad rule, we shall take exception now and then, for we do find very old people who had the great luck to live their own lives for many years, and we also find too many youths who have been duped by the youth cult and tricked into thinking that the ideal life is forever twenty-one.

Are you old and "sot in your ways"? Can you no longer learn? Then this book is not for you.

Are you young and "sot in your ways"? Are you sure boys and girls are the flower of mankind, and that life after college is just a slow, dark descent into dust and ashes? Read no further.

If you have enough sense to come in when it rains, or else to put up your umbrella, and if you keep up with the times well enough to know that uranium isn't a geranium, then you may add twenty to forty years of jolly good living to your career after you have established yourself as a successful bread-and-butterer.

The younger you are, the better, if only you're this sort. I would have written this book for readers between six and fourteen, but I cannot draw comic strips and work the text into funny captions. Some cleverer man will someday teach children the lessons herein set forth. And then we shall be on our way to the great life. For the art of the fifth phase

begins in the second. The youngest must understand, as early as they can, the art of the oldest. They must catch the whole of life in its true perspectives. They must not think that the climax is the first love affair, or the first baby, or the first job. All these are episodes in a story not yet told.

Wise Ben Franklin penetrated to the core of the matter when he wrote that "An old young man will be a young old man." Many people tell me they do not understand this. I do not reply that they have betrayed their own immaturity. And I refrain from telling them that this book is trying to show people how to live long without growing old. This is, in their ears, mere foolishness. But it wasn't to Jonathan Swift, who first made the observation: "Every man desires to live long, but no man would be old." Oh to live a century! Oh to have never an ache or pain! Oh to see with clear eyes! Oh to hear with sharp ears! Oh to take one's cake and eat it too!

Well, the time is at hand when, after a fashion, you can have your cake and eat it too. You can live long without growing old. Don't force this promise into something it cannot be. Take it to mean just what it means: you can make the years after fifty your best if you make the most of everything today's world offers. We'll show you how.

The Best Years?

HOARSE guffaws from the boy playing leapfrog, from the youth on his first job, from the middle-aged man who has just made \$42,309.44 profit selling two shiploads of secondhand motorcycles to the Paraguay police. "Old fraud! You're telling us the Best Years come after fifty? Go peddle your trash up the next street."

After fifty, you see such critics in their true perspective. So you smile. What can boys know about later life? They know only the first few years, and those badly. Their functions of understanding things are still weak. What can youths know? They are burning up with the lusts of sex and so see everything in the perspective of breeders. What can a businessman in his forties know? Well, much more than younger people; but still not much. His mind is focused on those profits down in Paraguay. He thinks living is making a living. The good life, he tells us, is good business. So the Best Years must be those showing the best cash profits (and the lowest income taxes).

To all such critics we have one answer. It takes the form of a question. What are the Best Years best for?

Best for winning the hundred-yard dash? Hardly.

Best for winning a twenty-round wrestling match? Hardly.

Best for singing in the opera? Hardly.

Best for dancing in a ballet? Hardly.

Best for breeding children? Hardly.

Best for working as lifeguard on a bathing beach? Hardly.

Best for organizing a five-and-ten chain? Hardly.

Best for serving as chief surgeon in a hospital? Hardly.

Best for managing a factory? Hardly.

Best for running a Federal bureau? Hardly.

Well, what then?

For just what we said. Best for living your own life, not a half life or a borrowed life. And what is your own life? Probably you don't know; few of us do until too late. But somehow it is the life that was latent in you during the nine most important months of your whole existence, before you broke loose from your mother. Somehow it is also the life that partly emerged from the buffeting of circumstances during your first ten or more years while growing up. And it most emphatically is *not* your life as a breeder or your life as a person who works for somebody in order to keep alive and well. Having children and making a living are not lives; they are functions of life. At best they express only parts of your larger life. At worst, they express nothing.

If you promise not to take me too literally, I'll crack my old, old joke, and not a terribly funny one at that. Life is mostly heat, power, and light. Heat in youth, power in middle age, light in the years beyond fifty. Heat makes for romance. Power makes for strength, often in the form of prestige and fame. Light reveals things as they are. First come the hot years, then the strong years, and last of all the light years. And with the light years we measure cosmic affairs.

To make the best of the Best Years, you must first turn the light on yourself. Who are you anyhow? What urges

well up out of your original and embryonic self? How cut through the thick overlay of habits formed while raising a family and fighting to get money enough to clothe the children? How find yourself somewhere at the bottom of the avalanche?

Most of us have borrowed lives for so long that we cannot burrow through to ourselves. But we must learn the new art of living. And we can, if we set our minds to it. How persuade people to master such problems? Well, I think we must first convince them that they have more to gain, and with less effort, than their fathers or their grandfathers or their great-grandfathers.

So for a glimpse of the Atomic Age.

The Dream Comes True

I'D RATHER be seventy today than a youth in any earlier age of the world. I'd rather be a deaf cripple now than young Alcibiades in the Athens of Pericles. The Atomic Age now dawning is already making more dreams come true than did all the thousand generations before it. And perhaps the brightest dream of all is that in which we see the years after fifty yielding more fun, more thrills, more insights, and more fresh experiences than all the rest of life.

Gush, idle gush? Well, let us look at the record.

Only fourteen years ago, when I suggested that life begins at forty, I said, over and over again, that at that time this was a dream for most people and a reality for the favored few. I also predicted that all trends were helping more and more people to make the dream come true. It then seemed to me that, within another forty or fifty years, most people might find their Best Years after forty.

Events have outrun the prophet.

Fourteen years ago, a babe born here had a life expectancy of fifty-five years. And now? His life expectancy has risen to nearly seventy years. Life-insurance companies are revising their calculations right now. The ranks of citizens past seventy will swell from the present unparalleled number of 6.5 million to 10 million within the next fifteen years

and then to 15 million by the time folks now in their thirties reach the Biblical limit.

What an oddity, to add fifteen years to life expectancy in only fourteen years! But then the world is topsy-turvy.

Fourteen years ago most workers were dull drudges. Six out of every ten farm tasks were still being done by hand. Men were laying bricks just as their ancestors had laid them when they were building ancient Rome. Carpenters were sawing boards and driving nails as they had been doing for thousands of years. Only one factory out of every five was then completely equipped with the best laborsaving devices available. As for the rest of the world, the mayor of the Cro-Magnon metropolis might have felt at home in most places.

And now? Pessimists estimate that our factory workers are turning out about half again as much in an hour. Optimists declare they are turning out more than double. A few engineers who say they know what the war has done to efficiency venture the guess that when we learn what has happened since Pearl Harbor, we shall see a far greater increase in man-hour output. But we do not have to rely on such hopes; what happened before the war is startling enough.

Today a modern farmer gets 40 per cent to 50 per cent more done in an hour than he did fourteen years ago. A few specialty farmers have more than doubled their output. While efficiency has been skyrocketing, crop yields have been rising gently. Fewer and fewer workers produce more and more food. Every agricultural engineer knows well that any farmer might double his output simply by using the best equipment in the best way.

Today, in scores of fields, a man can get about as much done in twenty hours a week as he could in thirty hours only fourteen years ago. So we are well on our way to an

era in which half time will be as good as yesterday's full time. At this point a few shrewd people pause and ask why we should concern ourselves further with shortening the day's work. How use the free time? We were getting ready to tackle this question when a world war crashed around our ears and put an end to the argument.

Fourteen years ago, people were asking why we should try to lengthen life. The degenerative diseases and the frailty of the aged, they said, made the last years the worst of all. Why prolong life for even a day past the point at which it ceases to be fun? Physicians stood silent before the querists. They had no idea how to make the later years pleasanter.

And now? I cannot report all the good news. There is too much of it, and it is scattered all over the hundreds of little fields in which scientists toil away unnoticed. Fourteen years ago, who had even heard of sulfa drugs? Only one or two men, and they were doing nothing with the chemicals. Today sulfa is routine. And thousands of people who, without sulfa, would have died are now having the time of their lives.

Fourteen years ago, nobody had heard of penicillin. Today it is in mass production; and chemists hover on the rim of the great discovery that will enable factories to turn out synthetic penicillin. Already the mold has saved tens of thousands from early death and will add from ten to forty years to millions of lives.

Fourteen years ago, who had heard of streptomycin? Or of gramicidin? Or of curare? Or of any of a hundred other revolutionary chemicals? Nobody. Today all are in standard use, each saving lives by the regiment.

Fourteen years ago, who had made much progress against arthritis, one of the most trying afflictions of later life? Nobody. But today the Russians state that they have

completely cured tens of thousands of sufferers with a new serum. As I write, this serum is being tested in many of our own laboratories and clinics.

Fourteen years ago, a man was pretty sure to lie abed for two weeks after his appendix had been removed, without its having ruptured. Today he always gets up on the second day afterward, and some patients leave the hospital on the first day (though this is freakish). A score of astonishing new techniques, all developed in the past fourteen years, have robbed a hundred kinds of major operations of their terror. Tomorrow a hospital will be a sort of Fixit Shop. One surgeon has said publicly that a man will soon walk in to have an appendix removed in the same manner in which he now walks into a dentist's office to have a small cavity filled.

Fourteen years ago, nobody had dreamed of a vaccine for influenza. Now the stuff is being shipped to all doctors and hospitals as a matter of routine. Three out of four persons who use it become wholly immune to the terrible disease, and the rest get it only mildly.

Fourteen years ago, a man who came down with pneumonia had a slim chance to enjoy his Best Years. Today? Well, a prominent specialist remarked, a while back, that he was now telephoning a sick man's family and saying: "Never mind. It's nothing serious. He only has pneumonia."

Fourteen years ago, nobody had yet hit on the method of curing peptic ulcers without drugs or an operation, in most cases. Today the treatment is routine.

Fourteen years ago, a few rash spirits had declared that they were on the verge of perfecting chemicals and treatments enabling them to produce almost any type of human being on order. Today, while they have not attained that goal, men are much closer to it than many of us dared hope. Indeed, they have progressed a century in a decade. The

time is not far off when some group will turn out some new human type and astound the world even more than the atom smashers have. It may come within your lifetime.

Fourteen years ago nobody had heard of radar or supersonic devices, except a few physicists in lost laboratories. Nobody had heard of more than two or three plastics, except the chemists who were working on such problems. Nobody save three or four physicists had done more than dream of atom smashing at some far-off dawn. I recall how, only ten years ago, two of the most brilliant physicists assured me that, while people would someday smash atoms, it couldn't happen for another century or two. And I listened to an able scientist tell me that the limit had been reached in a new million-volt X-ray machine.

And now? Atomic bombs can melt the icecap of Greenland; and, once gone, this would never return, say all geophysicists. England would bask under the sun of Seville, while the Scots would give up oatmeal and go in for home-made orange juice. At least, they would if we stopped our icecap smashing in Greenland and refrained from being swept away in our enthusiasm. If we were to melt the Antarctic ice too, we'd wipe out New York, London, Shanghai, Bombay, Calcutta, and a thousand other seaports, for the waters from the melted ice would cover such cities under more than 150 feet of blue, blue sea. This might affect the real-estate business.

Fourteen years ago, the outlook for cancer patients wasn't bright, and that's pulling out the Pollyanna stop a little. Today? Most cases can be either wholly cured or radically improved, if caught early; and there is already a fair chance that the next few years will develop atomic research to the point where this evildest of all afflictions will be conquered. Meanwhile its evildest phase is already a thing of the past. Since I began writing this book, a brain sur-

geon has perfected an operation that ends all the intolerable pain in even the worst cases and makes unnecessary the old morphine.

Far likelier and far more important to the men of today will be the tremendous advances in the control of cancer and perhaps other degenerative diseases of later life through the use of rays of tremendous strength, all under new controls for focusing them on failing tissues. Already millions of dollars are being poured into medical research using in some manner the new knowledge about atomic energy. Soon the investment will begin to bear fruit.

The older man shakes his head. A tear glistens in a mournful eye.

"Pretty-pretty talk, my fine young blade!" says he. "But it won't help you or me. Not in our day! Not in our day! It will take years and years and years to get results for the masses of the people."

I thought that too for a time. Now I don't. What changed my opinion? First, the stupefying speed of advances in airplanes. Second, the advances in technological lines mostly beyond the comprehension of laymen.

Just eleven years ago a few of us crackpots rushed into print and speech predicting airplanes traveling at five hundred miles an hour within the next generation. Friends warned us. The State locks up people who get funny above the ears.

But only a year after the war, men were flying over six hundred miles an hour, and liking it. One man, we understand, has stepped his plane up to seven hundred miles, at least for a stretch. Every engineer now anticipates, within another decade or two, giant cruisers of the substratosphere which will be able to hold a steady pace of five hundred miles an hour all the way around the earth. And war planes will reach a thousand miles an hour long before the next

war bursts upon us without notice. An expert of today is not considered crackpot unless he is working on a plane to make a trip to the moon and back overnight.

Fourteen years ago, an airplane might have reached any spot on the earth in about eighty-five hours, if only it could have carried fuel enough, or could have refueled on the way. As it could do neither thing, it couldn't get around. Trips were limited to a few thousand miles, with convenient stops. Five years ago, experts ventured into print with the statement that their planes could get from any point to any other point in fifty-two hours maximum. How we all gasped! Isn't science wonderful?

And now?

Well, we are just finishing giant clippers that will reach the farthest corner of this little world in about thirty hours. We have in flight war planes that, with one or two fueling stations along the line of march, will reach the furthestmost places in around twenty-two hours, allowing two hours for refueling and inspection. By the time you are reading this page, probably a plane will be out on a test run to go around the world at the equator in thirty-five hours, or halfway around in half that time.

As I write this line, Washington is considering the application of an airline company to run a helicopter service in the suburbs of Los Angeles. Commuters will soon be running from homes to office in about one fourth the time they have been consuming in train or auto travel. And the city limits of Los Angeles will then be extended to Baffin Land on the north and Panama on the south. Recently a Ventura farmer shipped two tons of fresh lettuce to New York City in a freight plane and got top prices. A gang of veteran fliers are now running charter planes all over the continent, carrying any old freight to any old place.

Now for the incomprehensibles.

I can't make head or tail of most of them, beyond the dim realization that they are now revolutionizing hundreds of industries. Scores are still military secrets, while hundreds are trade secrets. Only the baldest report has been published on many of these. But even the hint of their nature thrills anybody with a little imagination.

Since men started investigating the tricks of smashing atoms at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, they have developed almost five thousand new products and processes useful in varying degrees to hundreds of industries. Many of them do not use smashed atoms. They are improvements in devices for the control of temperature, for the prevention of microleaks in gas tanks, for switchboard control of high voltages, and so on. A few inventions have created wholly new methods and devices already leading to profound changes in major industries. One is called "gaseous diffusion"; it is a method of forcing gases through solids in order to separate the constituents. At Oak Ridge it has been used to separate U_{235} from common uranium. Another closely related method turns solids into gases with chemicals instead of electric furnaces. What scientists have learned about hydrogen fluoride in this process has revolutionized our knowledge about corrosion. Engineers declare this knowledge will soon be saving manufacturers millions a year.

High-pressure pumps have also been revolutionized. Engineers predict specifically that the benefits to American industry from cheaper, safer, faster, and better pumping alone will, within twenty years, pay for the whole cost of atomic-bomb research. Try to take this in at one swallow. Yet it isn't easier to believe than several other flat assertions of outstanding engineers. They tell us now that the entire petroleum industry must be rebuilt and, when rebuilt, will give us gasoline and lubricants and scores of

by-products more cheaply. The refrigeration industry is now been rebuilt in like manner; and, along with it, the "coolant" industry, whose affair it is to carry off undesired temperatures with air, water, or chemicals. So too with the tank and boiler makers, the manufacturing chemists, and others.

Can you guess the combined influences of five thousand new devices? No. Nor can Einstein. The little mind of little man cannot manipulate five thousand items in a single operation. It cannot work out the combinations from three independent variables without intense training. And even training won't widen its powers to deal with five variables. So five thousand variables embarrass us, don't they?

Of only one thing may we be completely sure: every month after 1945 will bring into common use, for the common weal or common woe, strange new goods and stranger services, each having chain reactions utterly unpredictable. Life will become more and more a mad adventure. Each year is going to exterminate something of the old world and, in the measure of its destruction, bring in new habits and new attitudes and new opinions.

And who will be the first to gain from all this? Why, those who are keen enough to perceive the worth of new things, energetic enough to make the most of them, and sufficiently well-to-do to pay for them. In other words, men and women of fifty and older in the upper one third of income brackets. Watching, thinking, saving, and acting; watching, thinking, saving, and acting: so has run their first half century. So will they continue, even if more slowly. Nearly all of the money and real estate is in their hands. So is the control of nearly all great corporations. They enjoy the best advice, too. Why shouldn't they be first to reap the rewards of the Atomic Age?

In the past fourteen years these older Americans have

pushed ahead further in every field than anybody managed to do in the previous century. Since then they have been extending the benefits to their children and their children's children. The offspring are living longer and better than any previous generation anywhere. Back in 1932 a man might have had only one chance in a hundred of beginning his life at forty, in the true meaning of the phrase. Today he probably has at least one chance in ten. In time his children will have perhaps one chance in five. And there the process will halt, as all life processes do. Fleas do not grow as big as elephants. Elephants do not grow as big as mountains. Nobody lives forever.

To win the jack pot, declare your hand. You hold all the cards. The world is yours. But you still have to get up and go out and take it. A man will still starve to death unless he is willing to lift a fork to his mouth. Dinner is served. Sit down and eat.

The Best Years are here for those who see them for what they are and use what they know to make the most of what they have. Right now, we must admit regretfully, men and women past fifty are not using much more than one per cent of what they have. And that one per cent is being used chiefly by the richest and the most highly trained one per cent of the people. The masses still linger in that dark, blustery, drunken world of the two-legged animal that laughs.

You still doubt that the years after fifty may be your best? I can only say that you cannot realize the world of opportunities around you. It takes more than heat and power to make the most of this world. It takes much light, too.

Does the light fail? Then you must be a young thing of thirty or so. But be patient. Light may come. Long before you reach fifty, men will be making more and better goods

in a four-hour day than anybody now makes in eight hours. Women will finish with childbearing in their mid-twenties. Children will learn how to shift for themselves around sixteen. Parents will be on their own soon after forty, with the wide, wide world ahead of them and everywhere to go. They will work one or two hours a day at home, to keep things running. They will eat iced mangoes for breakfast and reindeer steaks for lunch and breadfruit for tea. All the world will eat all the world's food. The only thing they will not enjoy will be baked apples with cream falling from the boughs into their mouths.

People will pay tiny taxes to maintain the world police. Of armies, not one. Of navies, only a few patrol boats and aircraft carriers. Profits from the Government-owned atomic-fission inventions will pay most of the costs of living. Rare will be the man who toils more than a thousand hours a year, except at hobbies or scientific pursuits of his own choosing. Almost as rare will be the chronic invalid and the unfortunate maimed in some accident. One of the stalest remarks will be: "Well, I have lost only four days in the past fifty years from sickness."

How do I dare say such things?

Because, within the last few years, for the first time in the history of our race intelligent people have suddenly grown aware of their own powers. They now know that they can do almost anything except create a week-old baby in five minutes. They have absolute mastery of nature and are fast reaching out to equal mastery of human nature. Within a few more years, men and women past fifty will discover, with pleasant surprise, that, as a well-organized group, they can control whatever Government agencies may help toward enriching the best years. There are about 32.6 million citizens older than fifty. Were only one fourth of that multitude to gang up and to serve notice on the

political parties that eight million voters would support the first candidate who publicly promised to give them what they wanted, what old campaigner would dare ignore the bid? Any election for President can be turned by a shift of only two to four million votes. Eight million would guarantee the election of the favored man.

Nor is this all. Most of the wealth is in the hands of people over fifty. Were they to pool even a small fraction of their assets, to put over a national campaign for a new order, they could buy their way through to Utopia, with parlor-car accommodations. I know no method of finding the precise incomes of all Americans over fifty; but I do know that during 1945 they were getting more than 65 billion dollars a year from all sources. And they may have got billions more; there is a dark area I cannot inspect. But in wages, salaries, dividends, and bond interest, they got at least 65 billion dollars. Imagine that buying power well organized to create a world in which the Best Years become the best.

But wealth and political action cannot bring the great age so fast as can the greatest glory of your generation, its visions and its skills. Most of the wonders we have been glimpsing of late have sprung from the minds of people now older than fifty. And if you include those who have been dead only a decade or two, and who therefore were companions of many men now alive and active, then nearly everything modern is the handiwork and headwork of the generation born since 1860; the mightiest galaxy of minds in all time. They are the giants who found radioactivity, invented internal-combustion engines, created airplanes and submarines, fashioned television and talking machines, snatched nitrogen from the air and bromine from the sea, cooked up plastics, first one by one and then by the score, conceived and developed supersonics and electronics, and

at length came to the supreme triumph of the ages, the smashing of atoms and the complete destruction of ancient man and all his apelike ways and mumbo jumbo.

Here is a breed that can make the most of its Best Years. These people are not going to sit around with folded hands in the purple twilight and await the end. Leave that wan posture to the pre-Atomists. Life after fifty is going to be the best life ever, or these fellows will know the reason why not.

When they call for help, you will answer. And you will get results because you are quite as superior to yesterday's rank and file as these giants are to earlier giants. Indeed, we have entered the Century of the Uncommon Man. We have millions of people today who are almost as far above yesterday's common man as the latter was above the ape.

Today a normal man of sixty is much younger than his great-grandfather was at forty. And a man of forty is considerably abler than today's youth of twenty, all in all. Not that he has the brute strength. He never can match the full-grown boy in running or jumping or wrestling. But then, as Mr. Arthur Brisbane used to remark on rainy days, when he could find nothing better to write about, the best pugilist of twenty is no match for a young gorilla.

As soon as the whole story of World War II has been assembled, we shall find what every insider now knows, that while all the heavy dog work had to be done by youngsters, nearly all of the decisive headwork and daring strategy came from men much nearer to seventy than to twenty. And much of the revolutionary ingenuity and intelligence and information came from men in their early seventies. It will also appear that, as in World War I, older men proved better fighters in desperate crises than youngsters. Gray-haired veterans checked panics and became the rallying points for scared youths. The middle-aged again proved what every psychologist knows, namely,

that cool, steady, mature judgment has enormous stabilizing power when affairs go from bad to worse.

As machines and methods simplify jobs, older men and women can carry full-time jobs much longer than of old. By the same token, they find familiar half-time work easy. So they may well consider shifting first from full time to half time. Later they may shift to work involving still less muscular effort, but more judgment and responsibility.

In any event, they enjoy all of life, as none of their ancestors ever did. They improve the world too, for they work with better equipment and fuller insight. So they enter the Best Years in a fresh spirit, and not as wrecks which the younger generation will soon place upon a dusty shelf in the attic.

This revolution confuses many a man who formed his ideas about retiring thirty or more years ago. And the wrong attitude toward retiring must now be scrutinized.

"What? Retire? Never!"

"SIXTY-FIVE, eh?" The friend shakes the big man's hand. "When are you going to retire?"

The big man bristles and glares.

"What? Retire? I retire? Haw, haw. I never felt fitter, Ed. Never. I like my work. I like the boys. I like my home. In fact, I like everything as it is. Why should I retire? I am good for another hundred years. Have a cigar."

The friend notices too shrill laughter, too vehement argument, too tense desk pounding. He doesn't say that the lady doth protest too much; but he thinks it. So he is not impressed when the big man points to a silver pitcher he just won in a golf tournament.

What is going on behind this noisy bragging?

What frightens clever men away from quitting and having fun through their Best Years?

The Horrible Example. You have seen it a hundred times, I'm sure. I've seen it a thousand. Out of a score of varieties, four stand out as common as they are dismal and as dismal as they are common.

Variety One is the good and faithful servant (of the Aerated Bean Corporation) who, after forty-seven years of toil, suddenly cracks and sweeps up his pieces into a dustpan.

Variety Two is the good and faithful servant (of the

Wichita Horse Car Company, Ltd.) who, in spite of fifty-three years of plugging, hasn't been able to lay aside enough for a rainy day; so he ends up in a steady drizzle without umbrella and without galoshes, a genteel and wistful pauper.

Variety Three is the brilliantly successful Single-track Mind (vice-president of the Acme Acne Salve Company), who knows more than anybody else on earth about blackheads, yet retires, on a fat pension, a hopeless pinhead, with not an interest in the world except blackheads.

Variety Four is the successful Ego who rose to power and fortune through great skill in bossing clerks and bullying directors; at the end of his career, he retires to a world in which he can bully nobody because he is nobody. His inner rage over his comedown withers the flowers in his garden.

Now I am going to argue that these four varieties are peculiar products of the American environment; that they are no more necessary than six toes or New Thought or leaky fountain pens; that sheer carelessness has done more to breed them than any other one influence; and that retiring need not be blighted with any of the evils they exhibit.

Variety One cracks up as a result of self-neglect, nine times out of ten. He overworks or overeats or overdrinks or overworries, heedless of heart or lungs or head or feet or kidneys.

Variety Two ends in penury simply because he never learned the simplest rules of thrift and practiced at least a few of them. A humble worker can, if he has the sense, provide for his Best Years.

Variety Three has allowed his job to narrow him to one tiny specialty that has absolutely no significance in the large world to which he retires; and his bad early education has brought him to this sorry state.

Our farming regions have produced tens of thousands of men and women, mostly Variety Three, but with rural variations. Let me quote a man who says I must not quote him by name. I cannot blame him for hiding under the thick cloak of the nameless.

Now seventy-five, this country lawyer has spent all his days in the Corn Belt and fringes. He knows his way around every town from Richmond, Indiana, to the dry reaches of the North Platte River, blindfold and on a moonless night. He has appeared in more than a hundred county seats on all sorts of farm litigation. Yet his spirit remains unbroken. What a man!

I now quote him word for word.

In this country, the mentality of older people who have given up their work seems to diminish or atrophy faster than that of people who remain in active work. When well-to-do and active farmers find that all their children are gone and they have to depend on hired help, they get disgusted, either rent or sell the farm, and retire to town, where, as the city officials will tell you, they become more or less of a nuisance, sitting on store boxes whittling all day, kicking about sewers, light regulations, gas consumption, and so on. They demand that the city taxes be cut. At sixty-five, they take no interest in how to run a town, or in facing the changing conditions of today.

In the larger cities, many of these retired farmers become, after about six months, disgusted with town life. Nobody reaches out a kind hand toward them. Then they eat too much and soon must go to a doctor. No matter what he advises, they go on eating like a thresher; so they generally die in from five to seven years. Some seek janitors' jobs.

All these farmers are lost. They scan the daily newspapers and find no news about people and affairs they know. They have never been trained to think about condi-

tions in the country, or even in the state. In olden days on the farm, people looked up to them and respected their opinions. In the city nobody wants to hear their views on anything. Soon they are absorbed only in high taxes and living costs.

Many a time I've gone out on their farms and discussed farm matters, fertilizers, livestock, land taxes, erosion, and many other matters; and here they are at home and speak out of full knowledge. Again I have gone to their city homes, where they have one electric light burning, and find them lost to questions I put to them about conditions in the country at large. Many of them find nothing else to do but sit around figuring which of their possessions they will leave to their children and friends, when they die.

A person should rust out, not rot out.

These unfortunates are often blends of Variety Two and Variety Three. With poor education, they have drudged away all their lives coaxing corn to grow and potatoes to swell and hogs to squeal. They have learned much about corn and potatoes and hogs, for they are by no means fools. They are merely single-track minds deep in the muddy ruts of Midwest farming. Living alone on remote farms has narrowed them gravely. So when they stop work on a given date, they have nothing to do but wait for the end. We must scheme hard to prevent this fate.

Variety Four is, far more than the previous three types, a defective human. He has the seeds of paranoia in him. They may never sprout into a green little Hitler, but they still are noxious even as seeds. His business associates have partly been to blame for his domineering ways and his belief in the Great I Am. A better organization would have kept him in his place.

Now, these four varieties are prerevolutionary. They flourished—or wilted, if you prefer—in the days before the

Atom. Conditions of life and business and education before 1945 created them, so we still have on our hands tens of thousands of men (and a few women) in their later years who terrify younger observers. What a fate! To sink into such a state is worse than death. If retiring brings us to this pass, then let us never retire. So run the thoughts.

And rightly too. The days before the Atom did spawn a loathsome lot of puling, mumbling, doddering, whimpering, witless old folks. You see the rear guard still on boardwalks and around shuffleboard alleys and in wheel chairs. No man in his senses would want to end up thus.

So to the big man who boasts that he is not going to retire for the next hundred years, we say: "You are an old-fashioned boy, Harold. You linger in the dear dead days of our good Queen Victoria. Catch up with the times. Hitch your wagon to an Atom. You think that from now on it will be as of old: when a man retires, he comes to a dead halt, does nothing at all, loses all his power and authority, and is ignored by younger people. You think you must retire to nothing but your memories. You think that your life ceases. Nonsense! You can do as much or as little as you like. You can do whatever you like, too. You can be more yourself than ever before since boyhood."

And this is the pure truth. Harold hasn't learned it yet. Like most strenuous businessmen, he is about one generation behind the world. But he is a bright boy. He can catch up. Give him a chance. When he sees the light, he will whoop and grab his hat and be off in a whirl of dust.

Men can now do anything with matter. They have signaled the moon and measured the heights of its mountains. They have dipped a radar thermometer into the sun and read its temperature. They have located invisible asteroids thousands of miles out in dark space. They have turned steel to gas with bombs, creating inconceivable tempera-

tures. Yet all this is a mere playing around the edges of the unknown seas. We are already moving toward the day when men will make all things so easily and so cheaply that the poorest beggars will have purchase money. In that day, the laborer who is worthy of his hire will get it; and it will be almost nothing. One man will make enough for a thousand others.

Then money will mean little more than the squeak of a mouse. Those who parade their riches will become comic figures. Those who wail over their poverty will be still funnier. The poor we shall still have with us, but they will be only the imbeciles and idiots. One grain of sense will yield a mountain of wealth. Then will begin the age of part time.

Today we fight over the forty-hour week and the five-day week. Tomorrow we'll fight over the thirty-hour week and the four-hour day. Once the Dance of the Atoms is well under way, we'll fight over the twenty-hour week and the three-hour day. Parallel with this battle will run the skirmishes of the guerillas and the snipers in their assaults on the established order of the dodoes. One struggle will turn around the age and the way of retiring.

Variety One of our Horrible Examples will go the way of all dodoes. It will be prevented from overwork and worrying by the simple method of making all hard work and all worry over one's fortune and fate unnecessary. Already one farmer produces everything for twenty eaters. Years hence he will produce enough for a hundred. And then? Well, why grow more food? Let's sit on the back porch and play chess. All Americans will get all they want to eat from the Atomic Age farmers, fewer than two million in number and perhaps as few as half a million. (Not a millennium hence, mark well, but within the lives of babes now yelling for their bottles.) During the war, with

no atomic-energy devices or processes, a steelworker doubled his own tonnage. Using the atom, he may double it again in the next few years, and then double it again and again. Three out of four steelworkers will, ere long, have nothing to do, for the fourth man will supply all buyers who used to take steel from the quartet. And then?

The obvious thing to soften the shock of sudden unemployment is early tapering off and early quitting, of course. Today this strikes old-fashioned boys as wild. Tomorrow they will all accept it as meekly as they accept the multiplication table. Today we think of sixty-five as the best age for retiring. Tomorrow we shall so regard sixty. After a longer time, we shall ask everybody to quit and enjoy life at fifty-five. Then we shall push the great turning point down to fifty. It is absolutely certain. For all the world's work of making goods and rendering common services will soon be done by half or even a quarter of today's labor force.

What cobbler wants to make shoes only to throw them out of the window because nobody will buy them? Who cares about making automobiles that nobody will ever drive because the old cars are still as good as new? Who is going to make overcoats of finest wool and throw them into trash cans because everybody has all the clothing wanted for the next ten years?

Work, in the common lines, becomes idiotic at a certain point. Men will not make fools of themselves for very long.

Variety Two of our Horrible Examples will disappear just as fast as poverty vanishes. And in time only the mental defectives will linger on to be cared for by the State.

Variety Three will come to an end through better technology and better education. The single-track mind already engrosses some educators. Its menace is being analyzed. In a short time we shall see no more of the poor fellow who

knows practically everything about practically nothing. Schoolboys will go out into the world with a dozen skills.

Variety Four is going to be the last to disappear. It is the hardest to spot early and the hardest to get under control, especially in democratic societies. Men who grow mad for power will, in the Atomic Age, soon become our gravest concern. One of them may blow us all up, along with the earth and even the moon. Luckily we realize our danger and are going to be steadily on guard against another Hitler, this time armed with a chain-reaction atomic bomb that touches off the oceans.

The big man who insists upon staying at his desk and running his business for the next hundred years will soon be carried out and put into a straitjacket until he wakes up and listens to the atoms sing. Remember those five thousand new discoveries and inventions that have already grown out of atomic research and are ready for peacetime use? Well, these will overwhelm the Great I Am. He is the slave of his own habits, even as you and I. He has made his fortune in the leather business through skill in judging leathers and machines and processes. But suddenly all he knows becomes worthless. A plastic displaces a leather. Nylon displaces linen and cotton. The old ways of working leather fail. The markets also change. What's this about a fellow in Ethiopia who pours goo into a mold and takes out a fine shoe in three minutes? Bah, I don't believe it. What is it you want, sir? You're the new receiver in bankruptcy? Help! Police!

As in leather, so in textiles, aluminum wares, refrigerators, tooth pastes, gargles, basketballs, fishballs, ice cream, cold cream, vaseline, and sandwiches. The whole economic system goes round and round. We are in for a dizzy spell of a hundred years.

To every Great I Am, be it published that he'd better

get out while the going is good. Today he is only a year or two behind the times. Tomorrow, he'll be five years behind. Day after tomorrow, he'll be ten years behind. Then he'll stare at the engineer's report and make sense of only one sentence in ten. The one he gets says that, but for the lamentable decay of the upper works of our president, the company might have made a little money this year.

Get out while the going is good!

He won't get out? He clutches the edge of his desk and screams at us? All right, boys. Give him the works. We didn't want to hurt him. He's a nice fellow in some ways. But now we'll have to crack down with the bitter truth, the truth that hurts.

Tell the stubborn fellow that men who have nothing to live for cling most stubbornly to the making of a living—that is, to their old jobs. Ben Franklin, you know, retired at forty-two in order to live his own life, and what a life it was! He didn't clutch the edge of his office desk and shout that he was indispensable to all printers and publishers. No, he had something better to do. It was the unfolding of his own inner powers. It was the saving of a new world from the tyrannies and stupidities of the Old World.

If Ben could retire with joy at forty-two, surely you ought to be able to do so around sixty. No? Well, then, you are simply revealing your terrible nonentity to all the world. In your office, as you boss the boys around, you are the Big Shot. In your businessmen's club, you are Quite Somebody. In your family, you are the all-provider, Dad. But when you retire and go off alone, then you vanish; for you are now nobody. All you seem to have is this tenuous web of life you call your business. To make yourself important, you insist the business is important.

Nurse, take him away.

Cultivate a Retiring Disposition

START on your sixth birthday to cultivate a retiring disposition. Keep it up for fifty years. Then you'll hardly notice the tapering off and quitting after sixty.

Take time off to be yourself and to be alone with yourself a little. Spend an hour a day away from parents and playmates. Learn to make your own bed, cook your own meals, clean your own room, shine your own shoes, and generally shift for yourself. Above all, think for yourself. Relax. Practice serenity. Refuse to be teased by bullies or annoyed by show-offs and cutups. Be as self-sufficient as you can be. And you will enjoy your Best Years to the utmost.

Alas, few readers of this book are six. But let's make the best of it. If you are thirty or forty or fifty, how go about the cultivating of the retiring disposition?

A retiring disposition is, in one way, like greatness: some are born with it, some achieve it, and some have it thrust upon them. Those who are born with it are the luckiest of all mortals, and they have a good chance of reaching the century mark with a third set of sound white teeth. They have immense native energies and strong interests that crop out in childhood. They turn eagerly to achievements that

do not overtax their minds and bodies. Their work absorbs them utterly. They can truly say: "My day's work is my life work." In them there yawns no gulf between job and career. Being interested in something, they do not have to be overeager about themselves. Probably they lack the chemicals that drive others on to the limelight and the arena and the circus and the throne; and so they do not burn themselves out in fame's futile fury. They go on, serene and cheerful, for years after their eminent contemporaries have been reduced to marble monuments and perhaps a slightly bad smell. Those who achieve a retiring disposition deserve medals and honorable mention. Those who have had the virtue thrust upon them deserve careful study.

Centenarians are born and not made (at least they will not be made until the Russians perfect their old-age serum). We can learn little from them, so we drop them here and now. The other two kinds of retirers deserve all our study time. Let us look at the third type first in order to clear the decks for the very long analysis of people who achieve the virtue.

People who have been through some serious accident or disease often have to retire for months, or even years; and during this time the abler among them learn how to break with work and make the most of enforced leisure on a lower-energy level. I might report here on a dozen or more friends who early in their lives came down with tuberculosis and had to lie still for from two to ten years in the sun. They recovered completely, went back to work, and carried their new retiring dispositions along with them. They had learned a new way of life and found it good.

It will serve no good purpose to tell their stories. You cannot profit from them unless you too have been forced to retire. And if you have been so forced, you are learning more about retiring than I can ever tell you. So the decks

are cleared; we may now discuss the people who achieve a retiring disposition.

Let us begin with the commonest specimen, the 100 per cent American. I shall assume this is you. You may not be 100 per cent American in other respects, but in this matter of retiring you run true to form. And what is that form?

When young, you rationalized childish energies. You held that work is the supreme virtue. You picked some kind of work and straightway magnified your own importance, probably by assuring yourself that you had it in you to accomplish great deeds in this field of activity. As you progressed, you ran into bitterer and more vicious competition; but you held your own, more or less, and salved your soul by rationalizing competition. You assured yourself that competition gave you a mighty incentive. Or perhaps this humbug was too thin, so you told yourself that, in competition, of course the best man wins.

Now you had to convince yourself that your incentive was good or else that, as you succeeded, you were really the best man. So you told yourself once more that battling rivals for the sale of 1226 cwt. pork chops, F.O.B. Chicago Stockyards, was noble and worthy because it was the only way to maintain Free Enterprise; and Free Enterprise, of course, as any man knows—says you—is the firm foundation of all free men.

Go back to the beginning again. As a youngster you early learned the fatal flavor of power. The more power you gained, the more you lusted for more. At the time you didn't realize that power lust is the most terrible thing in man's nature. It leads little boys to race 100-horsepower cars through city streets. It leads Caesar to declare himself God. It leads Hitler to ruin all Europe. It also leads many a businessman to go on making his second million after he had vowed—oh, the vows of youth!—to quit when he got

his first hundred thousand. Then it leads this same power-madman to fight for his third million, then for his fourth, and so on until his will is opened, and his heirs find that they have \$27,880,054.11 to jingle in their jeans. But the great man, the great man, oh where is he? Oh where is he? And whither hath his power fled?

Now, this fierce striving to use up one's energies and to satiate oneself with power, running on year after year, quickly builds up habits. Habits of work. Habits of bossing workers. Habits of haggling. Habits of slick trickeries. Habits of getting down to the office an hour ahead of everybody else and staying an hour later, whenever necessary. Habits of eating a tissue-paper sandwich for lunch while holding the telephone receiver against one's ear and jotting down quotations. Habits, habits, habits. In the end, they transform the young life into a borrowed life. Nurture defeats Nature by the score of 10 to 1. The successful businessman is 90 per cent the system and 10 per cent himself.

When you hear a man say: "I am not going to retire next month. True, I'll be sixty-five then. But the company needs me. I'm the only one who understands the difficult problems that come up every day in Shop Number 6. And I'm the only one who knows the files, too," then you know you are listening either to Nurture or to a very bad manager.

The surest mark of a good manager is the ease with which he can drop out, without notice, at any time, causing not the slightest upset in the business. The black mark of a bad manager is that the whole office jams every time he misses his morning train in from New Rochelle. He is indispensable. Hence he thinks himself very good, but in truth he is a dub and a flop.

When you find on your pay roll a man who is indispensable, fire him at once. Treat yourself likewise. Train

others to know all you know and to do all you can do; then the organization has teamwork.

I'm not picking on businessmen. I merely use them as easy examples. I say the same of mothers. A mother who says she is indispensable to her children is a bad egg. Her children are badly brought up. Somebody ought to call in the truant officer, or a psychiatrist. A father who tells you he must go on working because his family needs the income is a poor manager, unless he has had a long run of foul luck. Had he known his business, he would have started training his wife and children to get along without him from the very first day. A teacher who thinks that his school cannot run without him is an even bigger simpleton. And so on through the whole list of human tasks. Even wet nurses have to train babies to do without them in time.

Learn this: All habits, once well established, strive to justify themselves. They strive to make the mind accept them, even though they are squatters on lands to which the mind rightfully holds title. Each habit becomes a sovereign power, according to its own dictum. It claims inalienable rights. It is supreme. Man exists for it, not it for man.

Every habit forces the mind to say "Impossible!" to all hostile habits, actual or merely proposed. So it came about that the Red Queen was wise beyond all humankind when she undertook to think six impossible things before breakfast. And William James was far wiser than Her Majesty when he laid down the rule of doing something every day that ran contrary to all of one's habits. The habits may scream "Impossible!" for ages, as long as you only think of things that contravene them. But if you start doing the unhabitual or the antihabitual, in time the screams will die down, and so too will the habits. A new habit will arise and shine.

Take you. If, as I assume politely, you are altogether

normal of mind and body, you have a large assortment of habits, each of which has cunningly tricked your mind into believing that any way of behavior contrary to itself is impossible, absurd, vicious, unscrupulous, contrary to common sense, in violation of the Constitution, or maybe just nasty. We are all exactly like the well-bred Japanese who turn white and then cover their faces in disgust at the sight of two people kissing in a motion-picture scene. We are not conditioned to regard kissing as a foul act, but we are conditioned to hate or to fear or to loathe other acts, many of which strike most other people on earth as of not the slightest importance for good or for evil. If you doubt this, go to Hollywood and watch the screen censors at work. Then laugh yourself to death.

Most Americans are thus conditioned toward work and success and keeping everlastingly at it. Unfortunately, they are too narrowly "set in their ways." It may be all right to work. But it isn't all right to hold firmly and forever to the identical patterns of work. In some measure, we are all like good prizefighters; we come to a time when we must quit or else go down in quick defeat. The good prizefighter soon finds something else to do. It may be quite strenuous, but it is different. I shall soon be showing how the human body has a strange pace which it strives to hold as far as available energies permit. The drive to be doing is life itself and cannot be thwarted without danger. But the drive of particular habits is not like that. Man must adapt himself continuously to all kinds of changes, and so he must change his habits as he moves from decade to decade. For the world changes, and so does he.

A habit has enormous momentum. Stop it dead and you have a wreck on your hands. Never try to drive your car at top speed into a stone wall. It's bad for the car, and maybe for you. When you set out to acquire a retiring dis-

position, follow the same rule. Taper off. Ease in on the brakes. Under no circumstances come right up to the day of your retiring running at top speed. Begin easing yourself off years before. If you didn't start at six, start at twenty. If you forgot to start at twenty, start at thirty. But start well before you stop.

One way to begin is to attack your own rationalizations. Become your own devil's advocate. He is the gentleman employed by the Vatican to find all the good reasons why somebody should *not* be canonized as a saint. He is an expert in finding evil in the good. Well, try doing this, with yourself as the person to be canonized.

You know your own rationalizations. I don't. Make up a list of all the arguments you use against friends who delicately suggest that you quit and get out. Think up everything you can against each argument. Ask your worst enemy to help you.

You won't have a retiring disposition at the end of this procedure. A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. Worse yet, he has the same old habits. But this is a starter. Your next step is to practice William James's rule. Break at least one pleasant habit every day. Break simple habits first. I know a clever woman in her mid-fifties who tried this first by simply driving her car along a new route every morning, no matter how long and painful the streets and the traffic might be. She next changed restaurants every noon and ate a frightful lot of food she hated. But she ate it. Then she read George Eliot every evening until nauseated. Then some books on Yoga until dizzy. Then she tried wearing wholly different clothes once a week. She disliked their cut and their color, no less than their cost. But she stuck it out. And after a few years, in line with the best of our patent-medicine advertisements, she was completely cured of her borrowed life. She reached

a point of impudent independence at which she quit a fine job and went into business for herself; and in the five years before she retired she made more money than ever before. But don't go drawing wrong conclusions here.

Try the methods of the Horrible Examples. Study well men and women who have done all the wrong things. Analyze those who worked themselves down to nothing at all before they retired. See what was left of them.

If only you might have begun at six, you'd have acquired the retiring disposition by taking a hundred thousand vacations in the course of your long and happy life. Being somewhat older now, I can only exhort you to take as many of these vacations as your years permit.

A vacation, as you surely have forgotten, is "the act of making empty." A landlord demands the immediate "vacation" of the premises when his tenant refuses to pay rent. Nature demands the immediate "vacation" of nerves and muscles when the occupant has abused his privileges by overworking the equipment.

When you completely vacate your workshop, you are asleep. Nothing goes on in the workshop except just being a vacant workshop. Babies sleep most of the time because their workshops are being enlarged and decorated and outfitted with new machines. So of course the babies have to stay out while all this is going on, don't they? Once the workshop is ready for business, children—no longer babies—vacate it rarely, except on the long shift in the dark, when they can't see to work. After forty years or longer, the workers want to vacate oftener. Why don't they? Oh, it's all habit. Nothing but habit.

By and large, a man ought, in the course of a long life, say seventy-five years, to vacate the shop about one hundred thousand times. Take that as a rude average, with wide variations for a wide range of creatures. The older he

grows, the oftener he must vacate. Through his first twenty years he may not take so many full stops as later. But he must take them often enough to form a habit of stopping.

After twenty he'd be wise to vacate four times a day, taking off some ten hours in all, again a smooth average and no more. Let him vacate completely for seven hours. Let every minute of that be deep sleep. Let him do as he likes with his remaining three vacations. He may not care to go to bed. He may prefer to stretch out on a beach, or under an old maple, or in the hayloft, or back of the barn, or before the crackling red logs in the fireplace, or in the bottom of a canoe. He may choose to relax on the front porch in his rocking chair and watch the world go by. He may take a walk. He may play billiards. He may, if he is content with the poorest vacation of all, merely shift from what he has been doing to something wholly different, thus using a totally different set of muscles.

The more completely you vacate, the sooner and the better you are rested and ready for another bout with the world. And the oftener you vacate, up to some limit near six hours, the better. The longer any vacation beyond some bottom limit of a day or two, the worse for you. And the saddest bungler I know is the nitwit who works like a slave for forty years with no genuine vacations or with few, gets rich, and then stops cold for the rest of his life. He calls it retiring. The coroner calls it suicide.

The idea of one hundred thousand vacations could not have arisen half a century ago. Men then had not yet found how fast even an exhausted body bounces back. They did not appreciate the evil of long rests and long efforts. Now they do.

Long rests, especially in bed, cause serious upsets. Many a man who might have arisen well and gone about his affairs

after a few days in a hospital shortens his life by lolling around luxuriously and allowing nurses to do everything for him, just because it feels so good. This is a long story, but well proved by thousands of cases recently investigated.

Many short rests are better for almost everybody save a few invalids, particularly the tuberculous. Prove it on yourself. Run. Chop wood. Climb a hill until you pant. Then lie down and relax. If under forty, you'll be fresh again in twenty minutes. If over forty and flabby, you may take half an hour or more. But unless there's something wrong with you, you'll recover nine tenths of your energies in seven or eight minutes.

True, the older you are, the more slowly you freshen. But this law applies with serious force chiefly to sudden and great efforts. Most very old people can walk all day about as well as when twenty. But if they run a short distance, they are done for. The lungs cannot pick up oxygen fast enough for spurts. But they pick up enough for a steady pace and the daylong plug-along.

The retiring disposition is an inclination to stop often and altogether. If it is not an instinct, it must become a habit. It saves us all from the vilest of acts, the sudden halting of all activities after years of restless driving. Shock is death. Ease in on the brakes, and you don't wear them out or skid the car.

As you begin going to school, you might as well learn a hundred thousand vacations from your first teacher. She's an expert, or soon will be. She and her profession come closer to the ideal than any other. Observe her well and profit by her example.

Two out of three teachers look forward with pleasure to retirement. This is a remarkably large proportion. How so? I think it is because teachers come closer than any other large class of workers to the ideal of a hundred thousand

vacations I am holding up. They have the habit of retiring long before they take it up as a full-time enterprise.

From the start, a teacher has short hours. Six in many places. Never more than seven, so far as I can find. Always a five-day week. Always a tremendous vacation through the summer, far longer than any millionaire dares take. Two or three weeks around the year's end. A few days around Thanksgiving. The year's total ranges between fifteen and eighteen weeks. So, if she starts work at twenty and ends at sixty, she enjoys at least six hundred weeks of free time and perhaps as much as 720. Say between twelve and fourteen years of vacations! Small wonder she gets the habit. She started tapering off on the day she took her first job. Of course, she is going to enjoy her Best Years! She's been training for them all her life.

Go and do likewise.

In some significant degree most women rank somewhat below teachers but far above most men in ordering their lives before sixty so that they develop retiring dispositions, usually gracious. Indeed, they need this book less sorely than do men.

Nature has done for them what I am here trying to advise men to do for themselves. There is little or no abrupt quitting for most women. However old they grow, they still go on doing pretty much the same thing. So, in the man's sense, they hardly retire at all, they taper off so gently.

In a family of modest means, the wife spends her hours over babies and the kitchen sink for the first twenty years; and, after her husband retires, she spends them over babying him and over the kitchen sink. In a well-to-do family, the wife runs around shopping and playing cards and chatting with friends and taking many week ends off for fun, thus breaking up her years into thousands of tiny vacations,

just as we have been recommending. So she comes into her Best Years better prepared for further tapering off than her husband is.

To make matters still better for her, she went through the pain of losing her authority when the children grew up and then left home. The husband got little of this shock. She got it gradually. The husband feels it suddenly when he closes his office desk for the last time and no longer gives orders to anybody. By this time, the wife is accustomed to an unauthoritative career and likes it.

A wife has only one large task that differs much from those confronting her husband on retirement. It is her responsibility for easing him out of his active habits into his new tapering ways of life, with the least possible upset. But the unmarried woman who has been working most of her active life has the man's problems, although in a somewhat slighter degree. She has probably kept house in her own simple way for herself, if not for a mother or a sister. She has certain deeply rooted habits that carry her through the day much more easily than the man's carry him. So the tapering off is simpler.

Yes, women are lucky. We shall leave them alone with their luck. Whenever they do well with it, however, we may tell the world about them. If, on the other hand, they have no luck, but have to work as men in a man's world, then let them read what we have to say about men. It will apply to them too.

Taking It Easy the Hard Way

CHOTTLE and I grew up together. He's four years older than I am. For every penny I made in the last half century good old Chottle made a dollar. Being intelligent, he never squandered it; but he did lose much in the several depressions and wars since 1893. He retired at sixty with more than enough to take it easy. And he did so, but in the hard way.

He stopped cold in his tracks, then sat down in a warm spot and from thenceforth looked backward. He wrote letters to everybody he'd known since the age of ten. He exchanged photographs. He went to every high-school and college alumni banquet, even if he had to travel across the continent to get there, call some old pal Bill, drink toasts to the dear departed, give the class yell, and then ride back home somewhat depressed—he didn't understand why. It couldn't be those last fourteen cocktails, could it?

He says he travels more than ten thousand miles every year to parties and conventions, where he lives over again his past. He has six big albums in his parlor, all packed with snapshots of Chottle in his high-school baseball suit, Chottle running home in third place in the Freshman Mile Run at the 1899 Pittsburgh Interscholastic, Chottle in evening dress

back in the middle of the Glee Club, Chottle and his sweetheart on the bleachers at the great Yale game, Chottle and his three younger brothers in a serious family group, Chottle, Chottle, Chottle this and Chottle that, on and on for fifty years. Look pleasant, please, Mr. Chottle.

Whenever an old friend from Chottle's town reaches Los Angeles, Chottle is lurking somewhere in the lobby and snatches him away from his business to talk over old times. In a few minutes, the old-timer has discovered that the Christian Era came to a full stop on the day Chottle retired. Whatever happened since then is nothing but seconds and minutes. Chottle is back in the old days, the only days that live for him.

Each such impromptu reunion gives Chottle a fair chance to set up a grand dinner for his old friend, and to overeat. He also overdrinks by about a quart of 90 proof. So Chottle now weighs about forty pounds more than I do, although I am half a head taller. By simple disuse of gray matter above his ears, Chottle now has nothing to say, and he says it dully. Which is a pity, for he used to be a wit and a wag.

Worse yet, his loss of mind cost him dearly last year. He had to handle a large business deal for his aging sister, and he managed to lose more money than I ever had, all at a whack, too. However, he still has a fine car, a large mansion with ocean view, membership in six clubs, and a sizable income tax. He spends more on clubs than I do for all my dark and dismal subsistence. And he forgets bills too. He can't recall names well any more.

Yes, Chottle died years ago, but hasn't yet been notified. And all because he chose to take it easy the hard way. He couldn't accept the first rule of the retiring disposition. He had to run with the herd always. He never could be alone. So in time the herd overwhelmed him. And he was not.

Get it straight. What killed him wasn't the herd, as such.

It was Chottle's old herd. The same old crowd. The same old ways. The herd was Chottle's habit system. When he reached his sixties, he went right on living his twenties and thirties and forties and fifties all over again, as best he could. He had built up a life borrowed from his friends and associates. He was no longer Chottle. He was the Class of 1899. He was First Tenor in the Glee Club.

He spent his later years living backward. And you just can't do it without disaster. Life moves only one way, always forward. Life is a one-way street. Poor Chottle never understood this. He thought the best was past. How wrong! The best is yet to be. He thought that the only desirable things were those he used to enjoy. How wrong! John Dewey could have taught him better.

"Desire for flowers," Dewey observed many years ago, "comes after the enjoyment of flowers." So always. It's the experience that confirms the craving and makes strong the later ideal. Chottle and millions of others like him fall into the fatal error of supposing that all good lies in the past; and they get to this absurdity by arguing that they found all of their good things there. Of course they did. But how large a part of the universe of good things does any one man's experience encompass? Write down a decimal point and then a million zeros to the right of it. Set down any digit you please. The result will be an exaggeration.

Now that the Atomic Age is here, and now that men signal the moon, let us beware more than ever of all old good things. Let us find new delights in a new world. Follow, with common sense, Margaret Deland's old advice: "When you are too old to do a thing, then do it."

As you try this, think of Grandma Moses. She proves even more than Dewey's principle. She proves also that late-found desires may blossom into strange and exciting abilities.

Surely you have heard of this amazing artist. The newspapers have told her tale. In 1937, when she was seventy-eight, Anna Moses went hunting around the barn on her farm at Eagle Bridge, New York. She came upon some cans of leftover house paint covered with the thick yellow skin of dried linseed oil. Never before in her life had she tried to paint a picture; and by the time one is seventy-eight, the odds are that one is "set in one's ways." Not so Grandma Moses. She found an old piece of canvas, stretched it out on a board, and daubed away at it just for fun. It couldn't have been all fun, for she has long suffered from arthritis in her hands.

Well, that was eight years ago, going on nine as I set the word down. Up to now, she has sold 1086 of her paintings, and can tell you how much she got for each. The Carnegie Institute has hung some of them in its exhibitions. One of her best has been reproduced to the number of eight million copies. Collectors the world over buy her canvases. Galleries show them off. Critics rave over them and not at them. She has an unbelievable naturalness. How so? She is just herself. She does not know one school of painting from another. She has not seen many of the world's greatest paintings. She doesn't know Picasso from a piccolo. To make a picture, she shuts her eyes and watches until a scene appears. Then she sets down what she has seen. The very weaknesses of her drawing add a touch of power. It is the power of simple truth.

Now eighty-five, Grandma Moses is thinking of taking up architecture and building houses. Why? Because she likes houses and has always been a housewife and knows what a kitchen ought to be and where the closets go best.

Was she a frustrated artist in early life? No. Art never crossed her vision. She grew up a farm woman and never wanted to do anything else but make butter and raise milk

cows and keep the house in order. But how then did she become, in old age, a world-famous painter?

The answer appears in the following worldly wisdom:

There once was a man who asked: "Why
Can't I see in my ear with my eye?
If I put my mind to it, I'm sure I could do it,
You never can tell till you try."

Here is the foundation of all science, as well as all common sense. Here is more wisdom than is set down between the Book of Genesis and the last line of the Bill of Rights.

Let it be the slogan of all those who, like poor old Chottle, look only backward and find all good things there. This is the age of impossible things. Please do six impossible things before breakfast. If you don't end up by painting 1086 paintings at good prices, you may hit on something even better.

Part Time's the Best Time

THE wise man who first said that variety is the spice of life didn't know life. Variety is the staff of life. All biology testifies to this truth. So does all history. So does every psychiatrist. So does every factory manager.

Spend your Best Years doing any one thing and you dig your own grave. Part time's the best time for any activity. Change is the order of the day. It is even the order of the night, as those students know who have studied sleep. The soundest sleepers move around in bed every seven or eight minutes. Doctors have learned to worry over people who sleep like logs.

No matter who asks me what to do after sixty, I always answer, first of all: "A lot of things." And then we get down to the lot. He looks over all the activities and picks a dozen he prefers. I then tell him to give part time to each one, if he has the strength and the price.

You'd like to get away from it all? All right. Then travel. Play chess. Read books. Join clubs and debating societies. Play golf. But only for part time. And let the part be no larger than your easy powers.

You'd like to see the world? All right. Travel as far as you wish. See whatever you wish. Only don't spend every minute of your next twenty years wandering around.

You've always dreamed of running a little enterprise of

your own? All right, if you're sure you know what you're letting yourself in for. But don't spend all your day in a shop or an office, even if it is your own.

You need cash to supplement your too small income? You must take a job? All right. But only a part-time job.

You have always longed to aid a great cause? You want to improve traffic lights, or dipsomaniacs, or the gum on postage stamps, or the Republican Party, or the city sewers? All right. Go to it. Wave your banners. Speak your speeches. Elect your mayor. Name your own sewer commissioner. But only on a part-time basis.

Part time this. Part time that. This is going to be the droning thesis of this book, repeated until you scream and stuff cotton batting in your ears. I shall harp on it because it is the surest truth garnered by ten thousand scientists studying hundreds of thousands of people.

Say it over and over to yourself as you fall asleep: "To live a full-time life, I must do many part-time things."

Then wake up mumbling it. Then do it. And if you find that hard, go out and visit the millions who have died of boredom brought on by the monotony of doing just one thing over and over and over and over and over. He who repeats something too often loses interest in it. So he loses a normal incentive to go on doing it. Then repetition becomes a horror. Better dead than that. So he dies.

In your new full-time life after sixty, take time out for play. How much? That depends upon you. If you're like me, you'll take four or five hours a year out. If you're like my Westchester Gang, you'll put in half a year and like it. I'm a poor model, for I get my fun out of many other things besides play. So let me submit a few better specimens. I urge you to follow none. You will know what's best for you.

My Westchester Gang is strong meat. Some might call it

high. I fell in with it thirty years ago. One hot July Sunday Eloise sent a car for me. I rode seventy-five miles to a lost gulch in upper Westchester County. So screened with dense hedges and old trees was it that, from the road, the keenest eye could not have spotted it. The house stood a quarter of a mile back on a knoll overlooking a broad meadow, in the middle of which, of all things, was a race track.

On the wide porch sat seven men and two women, all behind mint juleps. The conversation led me to guess that the juleps were the fourth or fifth round. Soapy Smith was saying: "The way of the transgressor is hard to quit." Mame Roberts remarked that she heard Sheriff Olson of Nevada say the same thing the day he shot One-Eye Jake in the depot. Eloise said the line was in the Bible, for she heard a minister say it as he was drinking in her old Montana saloon.

Oh, pardon me. Meet the folks. Eloise, our hostess, used to run a saloon deep in the North Woods. She wed the biggest and slickest camp boss. Later they made several millions by striking pay ore on cutover land they got for a dollar an acre. You may guess the rest. Hazen, the man, died in his late sixties. A prize bull gored him; otherwise he would have reached ninety. Eloise carried on. And how! She's as clever as they come. Hard on those she cares little about, and a princess with friends and poor folks. She had been running her properties, all on her own, right up to the year before this party. Then she had turned the hardest work over to lawyers and was eagerly riding the ponies, rolling dice, playing the stock market just a little, writing the old mining songs as she recalled them, learning to paint (and how badly!).

Soapy Smith's real name was Soapy Smith. He'd been a cattle buyer in the open-range days, then a rancher in Jackson's Hole, then a gold miner in the Sacramento Valley, and

a few things we had better not mention here. Eloise said he was the only fellow she'd ever met who would drink a quart of warm champagne straight from the bottle before breakfast and live to eat lunch.

The rest of the party were all more or less like Eloise and Soapy, only more so. The youngest was seventy-one, the oldest eighty-three. They'd been cronies back in lumber and cattle days, all over Montana and Wyoming and Idaho. Herman had been a pugilist and a bartender. Mat had been in San Quentin and was as amiable as any hyena. Somehow I formed the theory that Eloise hadn't asked him in. He just came. Franklin was a one-time back-country lawyer who, if his own stories were true, had come into his own by handling dirt for the big fellows. But let that pass.

By lunchtime, Soapy and Mat had reached the point at which they poured four bottles of gin down the well on the lawn, to make the water taste better. At lunch, I ate the food while the Gang drank and drank and drank. I also ate while they sang. After lunch I sat in the cool shade of a great oak while everybody else went to the stables, got out horses, and bet with one another on their mounts and themselves. They climbed aboard the animals, lined up, and at a yell from Eloise, who took the outside, they whooped off. Then they came back to the porch for a drink. After which Eloise and three others played poker for real coin while the rest fell asleep wherever sleep overtook each.

I rode home thinking of that remark of some would-be thinker to the effect that a man is as old as his ideals, and when he begins to lose the ideals of youth, then he grows old. You may remember the exact words, if you've seen them on that plaque that always stands on General Douglas MacArthur's desk. Eloise's ideals are the snake's hips and the hen's teeth and the sharp corners of the perfect circle.

The rest of the gang have less flawless ideals. Would you say that the crowd had grown old yet?

These people didn't have to grow young again. They just stayed young. They had always played part time. No matter how hard their toil, and it was hard, heaven knows, at times, they let no day pass without a little whoopee. Experience is the best teacher, and habit the best drillmaster.

How silly to think that such lively youths of from seventy to eighty owed anything to ideals! Ideals come from parents and teachers. But this playfulness comes from the adrenals and the thyroid and a vast deal of hard living. Eloise and Soapy and the others had the right ancestors. I didn't.

Perhaps a century hence, everybody then living will do well to follow the example of William Leslie of Santa Barbara, who passionately skates and dances in his mid-seventies. He cannot pass a skating rink, or a dance hall.

"The way to keep young," says he, "is to keep active."

Yes, indeed. To that we subscribe with a rebel yell. Down with the disease of ease! But one man's activity is another's funeral. At seventy-five Mr. Leslie skates gracefully every few days and trips the light fantastic with glee. But one look at his face will show anybody that he has a freakishly good inheritance. Hardly a wrinkle in it. He might easily pass for a man of fifty. He retains a fund of physical energy most of us lost long, long ago.

So let us envy these spry oldsters, but beware of imitating them. All the lovely ideals of youth will not save us if we drink the buckets of julep and gin the Westchester Gang gulps, or if we go whisking around on roller skates, or if we glide over the ice unequipped with the endocrine system that keeps heart, lungs, and muscles at their youthful levels. The best millions of us dare is the light fantastic.

And most of us are likelier to take our dancing pleasures gently in a Creep Joint like the one Bob Kenney started in Minneapolis some years ago.

He had the bright idea of a dance hall exclusively for older people. He hired two hostesses, one a dame of fifty-five and the other a queen of sixty-five. They managed the Get Together Dance, held every night. In comes an old-timer who knows how to grin at the girls without showing the edges of his upper plate. The hostesses introduce him to a glamour girl of fifty-five whose past is showing a little behind. On with the dance.

Many dancers past seventy appear regularly. The oldest client is eighty-three. Age wipes out social classes. Millionaires dance around with guttersnipes. Sedate corporation lawyers waltz with widows in the laundry profession. All enjoy most the Whistle Dance. When Kenney blows a whistle, everybody changes partners, with a few seconds allowed for introductions. Membership cards are issued only after cautious character investigations. You know you're not running up against a Chicago gangster or an Assembly of Godster; and that helps. Hence many romances have bloomed on this dance floor.

Even dancing is too strenuous for many of us, after sixty. At best, it may be good part-time play on the basis of an hour a week. What then? We come to shuffleboard. If I find it hard to keep the hints of loathing out of my remarks, forgive me, for I have watched too many games around St. Petersburg and Daytona Beach and Sarasota. No doubt it is a noble game and fascinating to those whom it fascinates. But the grim mouth haunts me. The stern assault of the court every morning after breakfast is like Custer's Last Stand. The player must carry on, though he sees no hope. He mutters, with Cyrano de Bergerac, that perhaps after

all the battles most worth fighting are those we must lose. I turn away from this chamber of horrors and go for a long, long walk. Ah, now there's something. A long walk.

What a pity that we Americans, at least my own generation of auto addicts, have forgotten how to walk! All over the world, outside of our rubber-tired land, people still walk and like it. So do I, old-fashioned boy that I am. Need I rehash the old, old praise of this form of cheap play? I hope not. The western third of our land offers infinite variety of scene and road and lodging and companions to the sturdy walker. There you may still escape the stench and roar of cars, as well as the insane driver who shrieks as he grazes you in passing. Here you might walk for fifty years without ever looking twice at the same glacier or bald peak or waterfall or canyon. In California alone you might jog along ten miles a day for a century without once having doubled on your track, and still seeing a fresh eyeful at every turn of the road.

The most charming thing about walking is that you do as you like at every instant. Shall we turn right or left? Shall we keep straight on? Shall we stop for a minute? Or for an hour? Or for a week? Shall we eat the lunch in our knapsacks? Or shall we press onward and get a late dinner at yon hostelry? Shall we make twenty miles before sundown? Or shall we go back to the wheel chair after two o'clock? Whatever you resolve to do, you do it only because you like it. If that isn't perfect play, what is?

Walking east of the Rockies is uncertain business. Who can bear to traverse those dreary plains or those endless miles of pine stumps or those gloomy cypress swamps or those wintry bogs or those drab factory villages or those cluttered and tumultuous cities? Only in small spots, here and there, is walking a joy. Parts of the Adirondacks and the Ozarks and the Great Smokies are almost as heavenly as

the Rockies. Some of the Northern lake lands are cheering too. So, if you find your best part-time play in walking or in camping, go West and grow corns in the country.

Is even a long walk too strenuous? Then we come to sessile play. You sit down at it. Thus the general. He makes nice buttons, my general does. He has his lathe and tools in one end of the big garage he built at the war's end, when the General Staff drank to his health and said good-by. Yes, he was on the General Staff. Marshall and MacArthur and Patton were his close friends. Through two world wars he handled one of the hardest assignments, yet without weakening, or being wounded. Now he dwells in a charming villa looking southward to the sea. Every day, come rain, come shine, he sits down at his lathe and turns out a few knickknacks or bric-a-brac or oddities and, at a pinch, a new broom handle for the mop, or a wooden knob for the attic door. He is deft, this general. He can lathe out lovely big buttons while he explains to you the heavy losses in Okinawa and the reasons for changing tank models in the third war year.

I'd weep over him if he spent much time over this lathe. But he's too clever. He knows the life secret of part time. He studies. He works an hour a day on a military history. He goes to visit other retired generals. He is buying a small ranch on which he will soon be raising milk goats. He is teaching the neighbors' children tricks with tools.

Finally we come to light-fingered play, notably music. Perhaps you have long craved to take up the piano after sixty. Mad? You never can tell till you try. Your fingers may still be flexible and your ear keen enough. But do not despair if they fail you. There are many other instruments. One of my old friends learned that years ago. She had wished to play the piano, but never had time. She had to work too hard and too long. As she approached the age of

retiring, she resolved to start at this lifelong wish. She did. She failed. Not a little, but altogether and miserably. Did she collapse? Did she jump off the dock? She did not. She talked her problem over with friends. One of them, a practical Yankee, said that it wouldn't take such fancy finger-work to play a cornet. So our heroine tried it. She has been playing in a band for over ten years.

If your fingers are too stiff for a cornet, try a mouth organ.

Then there is travel. One man's meat is another man's spinach. There's no disputing about tastes, even if I do know that parsnips are terrible. We must be broad-minded. So I go on record as favoring travel after sixty. Some would play all the time, and some would read. Some would go to seed. I'd go places. Part-time travel is best of all. But it cannot be better than the traveler.

Let us get down to cases. There are no diseases; there are only patients. So say wise doctors. There are no laws; there are only lawyers. So say the wisest jurists. So say I as to travel. Strictly, there is no travel, there are only travelers. So we cannot condemn travel save by condemning some travelers, nor praise it save by praising others. We grow personal now.

Recall Thoreau? "It is not worth while," said he, "to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar." A wise word. Yet we know what he didn't; we know there are many things people do on their travels that are far more foolish than counting cats. Thoreau, more than a century gone, luckily missed the loathsome insects which have spread all over the world and have brought sneers to the lips of many a foreigner. He did not know the American tourist. He never met the man who hasn't the nerve to get drunk in Des Moines and so flees to Mexico City to pickle himself; nor the woman who couldn't quite bring herself to honest

adultery in Keokuk, but wasn't afraid to indulge in it in a back-street hotel of Paris; nor the boy who saved his money for a trip to Shanghai only to lose it all in a dive on his first day in the port and to work his passage back home by washing dishes. Nor did Thoreau ever meet the dowager who buys a ticket for a de luxe cruise around the world only to play bridge in every hotel and on every steamer, pausing hardly one minute to find out whether she is in Suez or Karachi.

A cur doesn't turn into a good watchdog by being chased around. A fool may travel from here to the moon and back without growing a shade wiser. Travel is what you make it. And you are you. This makes me more cheerful. If you have had the patience to read thus far, you cannot be much of a fool; at least no more one than the author. Probably you aren't merely saying to yourself: "Now that I'm retiring, I'll go see all the places I've read about." Probably you have the experience of the last half century seething inside of you; you have lived through two world wars and through the greatest depression of all time, and you know that much of the horror of your day has grown out of world-wide ignorance about the world. You probably want to learn firsthand how things shape up and what makes Russia click and what makes Britain run.

Probably, too, you've had a son or a daughter or a brother or a close friend who has spent horrible years on some Pacific island or in some jungle or on some African wasteland or in the slums of Germany or Japan or Italy. You have heard strange tales, seen hideous scars, and wondered about strange commands. Is this One World? Or is it chaos? When will the next world war start? Where will it break out? Why?

This is the background of the thoughtful mind as the Atomic Age opens. This gives to travel an earnestness it

never before had. Travel has become part of the business of living. Travel is no longer a luxury for the rich and an escape for the bored and the yellow. Travel is the next thing in school after the three R's.

That is, it is for the readers of this book. They are not much interested in the old assurance that "Travel broadens one." They want travel to deepen them. They will gladly take the fun of wandering along with the solid profit of it.

Need we go into the details of the coming revolution in travel? Need we assure retired people that the world is theirs, and at a price that makes it cheaper to move than to pay rent? Look at automobiling. More miles to the gallon and more miles to the tire. More thousands of miles of highway to roll along; miles in China and Java, miles in India, miles in Brazil, miles in Mexico and Canada, miles in the Philippines and Australia, miles, miles, everywhere. And all along the immense new stretches of concrete, good service stations and neat hotels. Look at trains. In North America they'll be miracles within the next year or two. Mexico is installing wholly new, up-to-date cars and locomotives. Look at boats. Vast new fleets are now on the way. They have comforts and luxuries nobody dreamed of twenty years ago. They will take you anywhere for less than ever before. Look at airplanes last, because they are best of all in the Atomic Age. I could write a book about them alone. The only trouble would be that every word in the book would be out of date before it reached readers.

As the war ended, a man might have flown in a commercial plane from New York to London in twelve hours. Today a schedule has been announced for a nine-hour flight. Tomorrow, this will be cut to six hours. As the war ended, a man might have flown to Panama in eight hours. Now he does it easily in six, tomorrow in five or less. And so for all other hops. To Moscow in sixteen hours; to Honolulu in

eighteen, to Tokyo in twenty-three. Today in one fourth less, at the very least; tomorrow in half the time.

But why all this speed? It may serve us well in war. But what is its value in peaceful retirement? A fair question, and one to be fairly answered.

It serves all you retired people just as well as it served the fighting men. It means that out of every given month you can devote to seeing the world, you must spend far less in getting to places and hence far more to seeing people and things there. So you pack into the time vastly more fun and more education than you could have done if you had spent most of your time going and coming back.

When I was young, I sighed to visit Australia. What if I'd had the time and money? I might have taken off ninety days some winter, to catch the antipodean summer. I'd have been a month on my way down, a month on my way back, and so only a month there. Today I'd need two days to get there, two days to get back, and so would have eighty-six days to see the place. Almost three times as much as of old.

Again, for shorter visits to nearer places, the modern plane shrinks distances to pinpoints. One hardly leaves home any more. The other day a neighbor had a call from Los Angeles on a business deal requiring his immediate presence. He was able to catch the southbound plane with only a few seconds to spare, fly a hundred miles to his office, finish the business, and be home for a late supper. Question: Was he ever away from home? Not unless you call crossing the street being away from home.

In the old days people retired to places and stayed there except for a trip back home for Uncle Ed's funeral, or for collecting the mortgage money. So they had to be careful about the place they picked. It had to be good enough to last a long time. How different now! Home is where you hang your hat (if you've got a hat).

Yes, a man can now move around freely, no matter where he lives according to the tax collector. Did he retire to Las Vegas? Yes, but this week he's down in Phoenix meeting up with two old friends. We wait for him. He returns. But he can't stick around. He has a date with a fellow in Miami. They're going fishing for a week. We wait again. Back he comes, this time all in a lather over packing an extra valise to toss into his car and heigh-ho, off to Banff!

Sheer fancy? Hardly. One of my oldest friends, a grandma of sprightly years, some six years retired as the saying goes, flies around the country somewhat like a mildly inebriated grasshopper. Now she is here, now she is gone. Now she pops up in San Francisco and blithely gives her friends a ring. Now she spends a week with a sister in St. Louis. Does it cost money? Well, she is willing to work part time in order to enjoy this luxury; and so she toils for about two months of every year at a good salary, to make ends meet. Home is where her hat is. She has six hats. Hence she has six homes. Or is there something wrong in this calculation?

Another old friend, once a college professor, also flits from place to place, though not quite so boldly. He hasn't money enough for Grandma's super-duper flitting. But he gets around. Nobody knows where he is at any given time. He has a fishing shack near Sarasota. He uses the spare room of an old alumnus near Corpus Christi. He gets into the Muskoka country every July for a fortnight of fish and mosquitoes. He takes a bus back and forth between his official residence, which I've forgotten, and a small town in the TVA country, where his son holds a TVA job. Somehow he manages this on a weekly income of seventy-two dollars. But ask me no more. High finance always was beyond me.

What will you get out of travel? A laugh at the native boys who dive for money all around your steamer in a tropical harbor? A snapshot of Vesuvius? A gasp at the Taj

Mahal? A burst of temper at the rug dealer in the Cairo bazaar who cheats you? A ribald story told by the ship's surgeon? Who knows? Travel is what you make it.

Today you can make it a prelude to a World State, if you want to. You can make it the starting point for a fresh understanding of the world. You can make it a fine debunking exercise, in the course of which you discover that most foreigners don't like us and why. You can make it a round-the-world drunk or a round-the-world circuit of bawdy-houses or anything you prefer. You are you.

If, after sixty, you crave escape from a world too hard to face, take time out for books.

If you want to learn any of the million things you never found time to study in youth, take time out for books.

If you prefer to continue the mastery of some skill or lore on which you founded your fortune through the active years, take time out for books.

If your mind has come to a full stop, take time out for books.

No book is a panacea. But books make up the *materia medica* of the spirit. No pharmacist's shelf ever held so many cures, reliefs, and preventives as any well-rounded library does.

How tell you what to read? I don't know your ailments and cravings. What stops bunions doesn't cure a toothache. The mind has as many upsets as the body. For each a book. So do your own prescribing. I can tell you little.

This much, however, I can say. Believe nobody who prattles thus: "You must read the hundred best books. Here's the list. Start with Number One. By the time you finish the list, you'll be worthy of an A.B. degree from Buncombe University."

Best? Best for what? For polishing your shoes, or for fill-

ing in table talk with apt quotations in Latin? Cloak-and-suit salesmen may believe there are a hundred best books. So may promoters and the inmates of sundry institutions. No cultivated man ever harbored such a notion for longer than ten seconds. Feed your sheep chopped straw, to save yourself the cost of good clover. It will work wonderfully, except for the sheep dying before you can market them. Feed yourself on the hundred best books, to save yourself the trouble of thinking and teaching the young to think.

As with youth, so with age: there are no best books for everybody and for all purposes. Panacea is no longer in vogue. Name your wishes and aims, then seek books to serve these. You may find, out of every thousand volumes on the library shelves, a dozen that are the best for your needs. Not one may be a book that any cloak-and-suit salesman ever heard of. Yet each may be better for you than the *Bible* and the *Koran* and the *Sears Roebuck Catalogue* rolled into one, not to mention the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Be not deceived by such pundits as John Ruskin. You may know his much quoted line:

"Life being very short, and the quiet hours of it few, we ought to waste none of them in reading valueless books." A noble sentiment indeed. It might be nobler, were it not for the fact that Ruskin himself wrote as many valueless books as anybody, except the pot-boiler gang. They may have been of some use to him, but not to me; and not to many people I've known. As I thumb through some of them, I imagine myself in the presence of a cave man who holds up a mysterious contrivance and says: "This is a thingamabob for delousing dinosaurs. It works."

Yes, it may work perfectly. But I have no dinosaurs. And those I do have do not have to be deloused.

Take much time out for books, if you know what you

need, if you can read, and if you are willing to study at least as hard as the subject and the aim demand. That's all there is to the whole business. It is as complicated as going into a drugstore and asking for good medicine.

"Good for what?" politely asks the clerk.

You tell him. The clerk fishes something out.

"Three times daily before meals." He wraps it up.

You take it and, we earnestly hope, get well.

Does a ripsnorting tale of finance, forgery, and fornication, taken just before going to bed, help you sleep soundly? Take it instead of a barbiturate.

Does *Joe Miller's Joke Book* make you laugh so hard that you don't have to take a cathartic? Then read on and on.

Does an hour over Aristotle excite you? Then get the kick and welcome.

Ten thousand aims. Ten thousand books to serve them. This is what keeps publishers in business and promotes the eyeglass trade and leads many persons to learn how to tell A from B. Now that the Atomic Age has arrived, thousands of famous old books have lost their once solid utility. The very matters they speak of do not exist. The standards they set forth have no meaning now. The ideals they extol are gibberish. Somebody is going to write new books to take their place. Watch for them as they appear.

The greatest age in the long career of publishing is dawning. Books used to be read by the dozen, then by the hundred, then by the thousand. Now they are beginning to be read by the million. And unless a truck loaded with raspberries runs me down while I am looking at the book-trade news, I shall live to see a few books read by the tens of millions. The first will not be in any sense great books. They will simply fill the need of the hour. As the need passes, they will pass.

If you read for escape, or for catharsis of the intestinal variety, you may ignore my next remark. It applies only to what we ordinarily call serious reading.

If you read a serious book, to learn something, never read. Always study. Look upon the volume as a textbook. Mark it up. Memorize its more important passages. Write digests of it, chapter by chapter. I ask you to do this just once. If the results do not please you, I'll not bring up the matter again.

This means that you must read serious books slowly and often. And this has certain other advantages, not the least of which is the filling in of many hours when you may be too tired to indulge in anything more arduous than pulling on your slippers.

It also means that you ought to discuss the book with intelligent people who are willing to argue each issue to the bitter end. This is a counsel of perfection. Rare the man who can find such friends. America has discouraged discussion. So most talk about serious matters degenerates into a few misquotations of what somebody said in a magazine, or was it a daily paper, a few days ago, when talking about something or other, I forget what. By the way, wasn't that picture of a drunken baboon in *Life* last week a wonder?

Yes, more time out for books.

Take much time out for thinking, if you can think. If you can't, use the time for shuffleboard or the comics or what you will. Nothing is more futile than amateurish bungling in the solving of a problem that calls for sustained mental effort of the kind we call thinking.

To think is to solve a problem "in your head," that is, by clear recall, by comparisons, by inference, and by the other mechanisms of the mind. Half of the task lies in the proper stating of the problem. In this half we have thus far found no machine to take over the job. Men have devised marvel-

ous calculators, all the way from pocket adding machines up to "Eniac," the gigantic contraption for the handling of problems beyond the powers of individual men. But all such devices do only one thing. They solve problems fed into them. They cannot see problems. They cannot break them up into parts. They cannot push their own buttons, nor pull their own levers, in the operation of stating the issues. Man, and only man, can see problems and state them. Maybe this will remain, at the end of the Atomic Age, man's sole claim to uniqueness.

Holding an opinion is no proof that one has done any thinking to reach it. One of the commonest blunders of amateur thinkers is to regard an opinion as a sign of mental effort. Thus, in a recent magazine for businessmen, the editors wrote at length on the myth of the thirteen-year-old mind; and they explained that adult Americans could think much better than children, for they held opinions of the most mature kind on all sorts of subjects. The editors had taken a national poll to prove this, so they felt very sure of themselves. But the poll only proved that most people hold opinions which many intelligent people, having thought through the matters at issue, regard as pretty sound.

"Do you believe that business is good for the country, or bad?"

"Oh, it is good," say most people.

How many had solved any problem relating to the value of business? Probably hardly one. Most of the opinions came from old habits; and the habits came from parents and teachers and magazines and radio talks and the general manager's noon pep talk at the factory.

After sixty, you must disabuse yourself of myths about thinking. If you wish to put part time on mental discipline, you must begin with a genuine problem of your own. There you have the right incentive. You must proceed in

an orderly manner to marshal evidence and to test each item. You must check every inference you draw. And, in the end, you must be able to set down your entire case for the conclusions you reach. Unless you can do this, you haven't been thinking. You've been falling back on some opinion. Or, at the worst, you've been guessing.

Thinking is hard work, far too hard for most people. I am not urging you to wear yourself down with it. But if you have a thoughtful disposition, I must encourage you to the utmost. Anybody past sixty who has even moderately sound habits of reflecting can work wonders if he will only stick to his last and have patience. He must not wander too far afield. He must make the most of his old skills and familiarity with a subject. The retired physician will do best if he takes time out to think through some medical problem. The retired lawyer will shine most brightly as he thinks through some issue related to law, as he practiced it. And so on.

America suffers cruelly for lack of sound thinkers in scores of fields, especially those relating to noneconomic matters. We need thousands of men and women who, having much experience, can think out solutions for problems ignored by busy men bent on making money. We shall return to this subject later.

Take time out for folks. But beware of using the time as most people do. Let me show off for a painful moment some Horrible Examples. They hurt me more than they hurt you.

A dozen or more dwell in a pleasant neighborhood. All must live modestly on small pensions and savings. Not one has more than \$2500 a year, I am sure. Twice a week, and sometimes thrice, they forgather in one of their dwellings. My secret service has held stop watches on them and reports as follows:

Eighty per cent of the time between six and midnight is devoted to Mrs. Glook telling about her Persian cat, to Mr. Gleake praising his old poodle, to Miss Glique explaining the diseases of her four alley cats, to Mr. Glork extolling his parrot and its latest phrases, to Miss Glerc reading a new poem about her pet canary, and to Mr. Glirk bemoaning the sudden passing of his two racoons.

Ten per cent of the time goes to drinking weak cocktails followed by strong rum and stronger gin.

Five per cent of the time goes to the telling of old, old stories, mostly off color just enough to make Miss Glerc giggle and Mr. Glork bellow.

Five per cent of the time goes to cutting capers after the tenth drink, said capers consisting of walking around on hands and knees and growling like a poodle, flapping one's elbows and trilling like a canary, and lifting a hind leg against a table leg in imitation of a dog with a weak bladder.

The evening ends up with two or three members too drunk to go home, so they sleep on the floor until morning. Thus they enjoy their Best Years.

Youths drink for excitement. The old drink to forget. And how they forget! They have so much to forget! They must forget the wasted years, the frauds, the mean tricks, the cheated friends, the lost opportunities. What a friend we have in Bacchus! The rising tide of alcohol engulfs more and more of us; and we are glad to be drowned. For we have nothing to live for.

These Horrible Examples show us how not to use our later years. If we must be with folks, let us be with them to some purpose other than escape from ourselves.

The best way to use the companionship of other people is for the purpose of getting something worth while. What? That's for you to determine. You know what's good for you, don't you? Well, then get around with folks and talk

it over with them. See what they think. Listen to their proposals. Consider a program. Even if it fails, it will keep you alive. You won't fall asleep in a drunken stupor on somebody's parlor rug.

The Atomic Age brings immense opportunities for people who get fun out of movies and radio and painting and writing. You recall Grandma Moses and her huge gallery of canvases all painted after she passed seventy-eight? Well, thousands of other people well past sixty can get as much fun out of the arts as she did, even though they cannot match her odd genius. And many a man who cannot afford to make motion pictures, or to put on his own radio show, can get most of his costs back from the commercial agencies, thanks to the rapid development of radically new markets all over the world.

Look first at your chances in pictures.

My good friend Mary Brady, director of the Harmon Foundation, made some motion pictures a few years ago to teach people the value of annuities and the importance of getting ready for retirement well in advance. She didn't go Hollywood. She stayed amateur, thank goodness. She picked her cast from friends and the friends of friends. First she got her mother, well on in years, but able to get about. Then she found a woman who had been an actress long, long ago. Next came the janitor in the office building. And then the cleaning woman.

The story and the presentation were kept on a natural plane. Acting was hardly more than being oneself. The atmosphere of a plain American family was sustained throughout. The work fitted the energies and the dispositions of the cast.

The old folks thrilled. They got a whale of a kick out of it all. And they convinced Mary Brady that older people

ought to go in for educational films. This makes sense to me, too. In fact, it comes close to being a bright idea.

Educational films have a strange history. I know a good deal about them, for I took part in at least five projects in the days when nobody knew anything, but everybody was willing to try anything once. To sum the history up in a phrase or two, the teaching of cultural courses has proved impossible, while the teaching of operations is a dazzling success. Movies are worth little until geared to teachers and demonstrators. They are worth nothing if done in the Hollywood manner.

Within the past year the whole outlook for educational films has brightened amazingly. The narrow film is coming into its own. The largest picture companies are now exploiting it all over the world. And the color-film companies are adapting their processes to it.

Narrow film, as every amateur knows, costs only a trifle. Cameras are small and light. Men can get to any spot easily. Accidental spoilage means little, as picture costs run. Outdoor shots come out well.

But the chief reason why we have here a fine part-time career for the Best Years remains to be told. It is the ease of adjusting all work to the wishes of the producers and directors. The Hollywood producer hires a costly cast, sometimes of hundreds. He must lug around crews of cameramen and accessory experts. The loss of one hour may set him back more than a thousand dollars. In a few pictures, he may spend twenty-five thousand a day. How then can he take off a day to go fishing? He is the slave of his own monstrous machine. Poor Frankenstein!

The producer of educational films almost never has a cast that cannot be assembled, or sent home for the rest of the week, at very slight cost, if any. Often he gets his sets and actors from a factory manager who is glad to have the

school film taken in his plant. Still oftener he uses free outdoor shots.

Before the late war, few independent producers ever sold their educational films. The big Hollywood companies wouldn't buy them. The schools either had no funds to buy them, or else they were too hard to reach if they wanted to rent prints from the makers. But the war has changed all this. Hollywood has a fight to the finish on its hands in almost every foreign country. One weapon it is going to use is the narrow film. This the salesmen can rent in tens of thousands of hamlets all over Asia, Africa, and South America, where there are no theaters and people are too poor to support them. A traveling truck can show narrow films for a nickel a head and make money. The screen may be rigged up at the back of the truck and a tent set up around it, to insure privacy at a profit. So too with tens of thousands of business clubs and schools and churches all over the world. The tramp film truck can carry 250 reels and show as many at one stop as the inhabitants will pay for. And, still further in the glowing future, a few men foresee private homes renting educational and other narrow films. If people stay away from the big movies when television arrives, they may still want some pictures more serious than what television may offer; and, if they can see them at home, so much the better.

A revolution is on its way. Watch the dust.

Half a dozen men and women in a neighborhood can pool their wits and cash in making serious and useful movies. What if they ruin a few thousand feet as they learn the tricks? Charge it off to education. And don't forget the fun.

The time to begin is now. Take two or three years off to master the tricks—and they are many. Allow a few hundred dollars for spoiling films and going to the wrong places at the wrong time for shots and traveling to Kamchatka or

Patagonia in vain and such details. By the time you've got something to sell, the market will be there.

Next look at radio.

Not so bright, yet brightening. The land is peppered with small radio stations. Almost every one of them sighs for its own good program, and sighs in vain. Nobody around to think up a good one. Nobody around to put it on, even if somebody does think it up. And, as if that weren't sorrow enough, there's nobody around willing to pay a fair price for a local program. The blunt truth is that most little stations smell very putrid. Last week's mackerel catch is sometimes sweeter.

Can retired people be persuaded to take their local station seriously? Can they come to its rescue with good suggestions? Can they work up programs to which neighbors will listen, not out of politeness, but because they like what they hear?

Can they work up educational programs that truly educate listeners? Can they devise such for schools as well as for adult groups? Then indeed is their fortune made while they have fun. Here is one of the great arts of tomorrow. You can work away at it at home, at odd hours, anywhere, any time. All you need, if you want to go semiprofessional, is a good sound recorder that plays back, so that you can study your own remarks. Several such recorders are now on the market, and the cost is well under five hundred dollars. If you like this kind of fun, taste it. Maybe a lot of dimes will come jingling out of it. Maybe you'll only have a good time. I couldn't say.

How about writing?

Not so hot. Yet warm enough to emit a faint glow in the dark. We have too many bad magazines and too many bad books. Worse yet, we have too many bad readers. On the

other hand, a few serious readers linger, and a fresh army seems to be rising out of the ranks of the veterans. Never before in history have so many read so many good books as in our Army camps and on our Navy ships. Some shrewd observers forecast a great day for good books. A few rash souls like myself even venture the thought that bold older people, by ganging up and pooling expenses cunningly, might rock the world with a score of independent periodicals saying all the things now hushed up or garbled.

Many of us who have passed the age of teething rings understand the fake freedom of the press under which we live. We know, case by case, all the censors, and could print their names and addresses. We know the clever little men who, for instance, sit in Hollywood and see to it that actors and actresses smoke the right number of cigarettes per reel and drink the right number of glasses of booze per film to satisfy the manufacturers' advertising agents, who kick in a neat sum annually. We know the fashion agents who watch the dresses and the hats shown on screens; and we also know the censors who cut out everything from faint damns up to a faintly derogatory remark about the packing-house industry and the Assembly of God and the Republicans. A few of us would gladly spend money telling tales out of school and making faces at libel lawyers.

Dreams. Idle dreams. Dreams of old men. Now what was it we were talking about? Oh, yes. Art for fun's sake. Yes. Well, writing for one's own little magazine, especially writing what others call unprintable, ought to become an infant industry during the Atomic Age. There are more things that ought to be blown to pieces than harmless little uranium atoms. And at least a million people would yell their heads off to get periodicals that defied all censors, even if the buyers had to sneak around to public toilets and give the high sign in order to get copies.

I dare not predict it, but I wish it with double fervor: that America may regain her free press in the face of all the Old World savages and all the cowardly businessmen. But I think the men who must take the lead are the older people. They are beyond fear. All pups are yellow.

Tapering Off

“**I** WANT to retire while I am still young enough to enjoy things.”

How often we hear somebody say this! How seldom we see anybody do it!

The easiest way to make the wish come true is to make a comfortable fortune before forty and then start tapering off. So all I have to do is show you how to make that fortune.

The second-best way is to scrimp from your tenth year, live on dry bread and oleo, with a cup of chicory coffee for breakfast and skim milk for supper. Never go anywhere. Never see anybody. Never do anything. In middle life, you'll either have money for retiring or be dead. I observe a widespread reluctance to try this method.

The third-best method is to taper off from your fortieth year, if you can, or from your fiftieth year at the latest. Read how Ben Franklin used his powers after he went out of business in his forty-second year.

Tapering off is the normal and sensible way. Fit your efforts to your energies. You thus avoid overstrain and shocks. If you go on doing the same work after you have lost some of the powers of a sixteen-year-old, you may rupture the abdomen or weaken the heart or bring on a haemorrhage. Thousands have done just that, as the result of running upstairs, or lifting a weight, or plugging away an hour too

long at a heavy task. If, on the other hand, you stop dead in your tracks and do nothing, the shock may crack you. No man of good habits can endure the quick stopping of them all, unless he is dangerously ill.

The desire to taper off lies deep in human nature. It shows up strongly in man's endless effort to shorten his hours of work, as well as in his craving to make all toil easy.

Only a century ago, farm workers all toiled from sunrise to sunset. So manufacturers began with that workday. After a while they trimmed it to twelve hours.

When I was a boy, Michigan farm hands worked around thirteen hours a day, except in the middle of the winter. The city workday was ten hours. I earned my first money on sundry jobs of this length. Grave was the shaking of gray heads when somebody demanded an eight-hour day, with six days a week. The world was going to pot, said the elders. To work only forty-eight hours a week would undermine morals.

While the senile were frothing in their uncombed beards, another radical popped up with a scheme for a forty-hour week. What a fight he started! I well recall some of its minor engagements. Parades, alley fights, soap-box orators, red-light torches burning in front of factories while crowds yelled for the warm, wet blood of their bosses.

Well, the forty-hour week arrived, but no ruin with it. Now the CIO is demanding a thirty-six-hour week at once, with a thirty-hour week later. And the AFL joins this campaign. Oh, what are we coming to, my dears! Oh, what?

Well, for one thing, we are coming to the twenty-hour week; not tomorrow, not next year, but soon. Much sooner than any of our mighty experts imagine, too.

What scoundrels will turn this scurvy trick? Oh, those same scientists and engineers who devised the atomic bomb. Those depraved fellows who are always cooking up devil-

ish devices that enable people to do more and more with less and less, be it machines or tools or manners of working or chemicals or atoms. It is they who are undermining that beautiful civilization built firmly upon those great foundations of everlasting morality, the dicta that man must work by the sweat of his brow and that we always have the poor with us. These enemies of society already have made it almost impossible for people to work by the sweat of their brow; the poor wretches must push buttons and pull levers and read dials on instruments. They are also ending poverty and making even good folks rich. Woe is us.

To make our woe more woeful, three large companies have been paying workers annual wages for over ten years, and everybody seems to like it. Hormel and Company, packers; Procter and Gamble, soap makers; and Nunn-Bush, shoemakers, have been paying workers not by the hour, not by the day, but by the year. As President Roosevelt said when he approved the plan: "What counts is what a fellow gets by December 31."

In the light of these trends, the hour seems right for a new demand. Workers over fifty ought to put in shorter hours, say twenty a week, and receive correspondingly lower wages, which must however be fixed for the year. If a worker must earn more in order to live well, let him find extra work. It may be in his regular job, or it may be outside.

Never give a younger person a task which an older one has been doing just as well or even better.

This must become the new law of the land. It is the keynote of genuine progress. It packs into a line the ultimate wisdom of the scientists. Let the worker fit the task with neither too much nor too little of anything.

Never give a strong man work that a weak man can do as well. Never give a clever man work that a stupid man

can do as well. Never give a swift worker a job that a slow one can handle as well. Never give a great mind a task that a little one can finish just as well.

Why not?

Because men suffer maladjustments of two sorts: one sort from tackling something beyond their powers and apart from their live interests, and the other from doing something far below their capacities and desires. Men are always at their best when they are doing the best they can do with the best job of which they are capable. Morale is then at peak. So is performance. We get from such workers the best that is in them. And we get, even on the lowest level of measuring things, the most for our money.

In the simple old days of the pioneer farmers, people understood the tricks of tapering off and practiced them without falderal. My own great-uncle did just that. He had four sons. As they grew up, he gave each a little more to do from his own fiftieth year onward. The transition from a little work to more and from more to a great deal was always so gentle that nobody noticed it. It was a little like the work of the strong boy in the old, old story: he began lifting a calf on the day it was born, and by lifting it as it grew was finally lifting a full-grown cow. By his seventieth birthday my great-uncle was a country gentleman with ample leisure to come and go as the whim moved. The four sons had taken over. Yet not wholly, even then. My great-uncle still did a few daily chores, to keep his hand in.

An old country plumber I knew well also did the same. Around his fiftieth birthday he told me that he was going to work only three days a week thereafter; and would I keep this in mind, please? I asked him what to do in case a water pipe froze on a January night while he was not on the job. Gravely he gave me the names and telephone numbers of two young plumbers down in the city.

He used to pass my farmhouse regularly, fishpole in hand and high rubber boots on his feet, all set for a day's pursuit of the tricky brook trout. As the years passed, he cut his working week to two days, then to one. By that time he was seventy-five and resolved to quit.

Then there was old Kuntz, from whom I bought a ragged old farm. Seventy when I took over, he retired to a cottage on the next hill and worked his garden faithfully. Every Sunday, dressed in his best bib and tucker, he marched past on his way to church. Two hours later he marched back, making a round trip of seven miles. He worked away with slowly tapering exertion until well past eighty. After he died, his executors found that he had abundant means and might well have retired to the big city and done nothing. But no, his instincts were sound. He tapered off.

Last, but far from least, the manure man. I wanted to buy a few loads of his commodity for my garden. I had trouble getting him on the telephone. Finally his wife broke the news.

"You mustn't call him so early," said she over the wire. "I got orders not to answer the phone till he's up."

"When's that?"

"About eight-thirty. He leaves early every morning, round nine."

I had been calling at half-past six. On inquiry I had found a de luxe manure man of a breed that flourishes only in California. A retired Oklahoma farmer, he gets to work at nine and quits at half-past three. He never works Saturdays or Sundays. He owns a season ticket to the municipal opera. He made a good speech on Fourth of July last at a park on the edge of town. Yes, he's tapering off too.

One of the truest blessings of wealth is that it enables you to taper off at your own sweet will. Many a rich man has

lengthened life and happiness by beginning to ease up around fifty. I've known some of these intelligent beings. The ablest one was a successful trade publisher. Before he turned fifty he called in four of his junior partners and told them to work out new schedules for themselves, as he would, from that day forth, stay away from the office every Thursday. He warned them never to call him at his home or club on Thursday unless the building was burning down.

For five years the staff carried on thus. Then he told them to rearrange affairs so that he might stay away Wednesdays and Thursdays. They did. It worked beautifully. Now, as he is grazing sixty-five, he goes to the office only twice a week, occasionally telephoning in at fixed hours, just to check up.

If wise, you will follow at least two rules in retiring. First, you will start planning where and how to retire at least five years ahead. Second, you will then arrange to taper off as gently as possible, so that you do not change your way of life violently at any time.

This is a counsel of perfection, I know. Thousands of people cannot follow it, for one reason or for another. Yet it stands as a fine ideal. Let me give you the example of a very wise woman.

She is now in her late forties and by no means ready to retire. For the past twenty years she has been steadily forging ahead in a large advertising agency and is now chief copy writer and next to the office manager in rank. Her husband died some years ago, leaving her next to nothing. She is on her own, and likes it. I know why. The day she went on her own, she began planning to taper off so easily and so slowly that she would never be upset by any change from week to week. Being unusually intelligent and vigorous, she also has the luck to have the wide versatility we

find among nonfiction writers. As Terman would classify her, she is a person of somewhat exceptional abilities in serious literature and hence likely to be above the average of accomplishment in from five to ten other fields. She lives up to his formula beautifully.

First she took up painting and did well enough at it to delight herself, even though she probably could earn little at it. Then she took up the guitar. Next she turned to the piano. Lately she has been trying her body out in gymnastics. But her two most important lines have been farming and real-estate appraisal.

Is she a mere dabbler? Well, listen to these facts. When she went in for painting, she wheedled a rich businessman to sit for his portrait. If you know anything about painting, you know that the portrait painter is tops. Never confuse him with the lady who paints two chrysanthemums in a pink vase on a green-plush table spread.

The businessman insisted that he must read while sitting for his portrait. He did. When he looked at the artist's canvas, he whistled and called in his friends. All agreed it was the best portrait of him they had seen, and the man had posed several times earlier for well-known painters. Three admirers immediately gave our amateur painter orders for their portraits.

She finished her triumph in fifty-two hours. (She keeps a check on herself in the best manner of a production engineer.) As soon as she can find time, she is going to tackle the three new orders.

Is she all puffed up with conceit? Hardly. She says: "Pooh! You can paint, even if you're ninety and tied to a rocking chair. The nicest thing about it is that you can always be interested in whatever subject you tackle."

She looks upon it as a wonderful diversion after sixty.

But she looks to her farming and her real-estate work as the solid foundations of a life of comfort and ease.

Last year she got her State license as a real-estate operator. But she has opened no office. She picks up a few assignments appraising properties for banks and estates. She earns enough at this little side line to pay all her bare living expenses. With farming, the story is not so bright. But it brightens. She bought a cheap farm in a section of Oregon she is sure will grow steadily during the next twenty years. She has been spending her vacations there, mastering the elements of farming. She can gather and spread manure now. She can handle a tractor well. She understands the commoner types of tillage and cultivating and harvesting. She has made little on the farm, but is not at all concerned over this. She says that, within five more years, she can earn at least 5 per cent net on it, and why seek more? She will have a home for the later years, if she wants it. Or she will sell it after land prices rise.

As she saves money, she invests it in small tracts and homes, according to the principles she has learned in real-estate appraisal. Already she has bought two houses south of the city and then sold them at profits large enough to enable her to buy three more, two of them already free and clear.

She saves part of her now liberal earnings scrupulously. She has reached complete self-sufficiency, but without wealth. My guess is that she must have salted away, in all forms, at least thirty-five thousand dollars in a busy quarter century. But far more important than this nest egg is her long range of vision and her steady, slow tapering off. There will never come an hour when she will be jolted out of herself. She has long known what time will bring, what she wants of it, and how she will get it.

A wise woman, I say. We want a few more million like her.

The most important phase of this tapering off is the reducing of energy output. Here is an inflexible rule.

Avoid all enterprises which are likely to force you to exert yourself to the limit now and then. Pick work that can always be done at your natural easy pace.

The greatest difference between young and old lies in overload capacity. Young people can spurt. They can lift and drag much more than they ordinarily do, if they have to for a little while. They have a reserve of energy enabling them to exert themselves about two and a half times their normal full load. That is, a man who ordinarily lifts 100 pounds can, under the severest emergency, hoist 250 pounds off the ground. I have seen this happen several times, and it still bewilders me a little. And I have done it myself too. Nobody can do it by a mere act of will. The conditions have to be unusual. Life-or-death predicaments serve best. Danger of terrible losses works well.

From one's fifteenth year on to one's fortieth this capacity for handling an overload declines slowly but surely. After forty it drops fast, but the ability to carry on at a natural pace does not. This pace declines very slowly up to the sixtieth year, then a little faster. Sudden overloads after fifty may wreck an organ, above all the heart. I know a man who wrecked his next twenty years as a result of an hour's overload. He had just retired to a small farm, all alone. He had bought a fine little tractor, with proper equipment. As he was plowing a field, something went wrong. He had to take off parts, put them back again, lift wheels, and in the end walk some three miles to town to get a mechanic. He overstrained his heart. He has never since been able to do more than the lightest work around the house and yard.

Farming is a business to scan narrowly. It is so easy for machines or tools or bulls or stallions to start trouble that can be handled only by sudden and violent overstrain. A youth of twenty might come through the overload well. A man or woman past fifty might clip two decades off life. And as with farming, so with many other kinds of work.

If, for reasons that strike you as good and sufficient, you do take up work of this sort, be sure to inspect the neighborhood for competent help for possible emergencies.

Later I shall be reporting intriguing opportunities for retired people on small part-time farms. Let me warn you now as I shall warn you later: Beware of overloads! Whatever you do, arrange everything so that you always are tapering off.

In general I always hesitate to recommend farming to older people because of the dangers of emergency exertions. So many aspirants get along well for a long time and then forget.

What's Your Own Best Way?

Now we come to the most serious of all problems confronting people after fifty. It is extra-hard because it varies greatly with the person and is understood only through searching self-analysis. Do not be discouraged if you cannot quickly understand some matters here. Nobody knows much about them. There are no simple cut-and-dried rules.

Maybe a simple statement of purpose will help you through these hard pages. Commit it to memory.

Your best way to avoid the horrors of second childhood is to keep your first childhood alive and lusty.

Someday not far off, everybody will recognize that the horrible form of senility known as second childhood arises only in unfortunates who have lost every trait of their first childhood.

Does this bewilder you? Take your time to think it over, as you read on.

As you read on, please keep in the back of your thinking all we have been saying about the tapering off of energies, about resting, about getting used to being alone, and the rest. These fundamentals of a retiring disposition will determine largely which enterprise, job, or hobby you had better take up.

Keep far up in the front of your thinking all that you

learn about your own original nature, for that may well turn out to be your salvation. The more you bring into this world, the less you have to borrow from other lives. The stronger your native urges, the less you will have to lean on others in later years; and the smaller the peril of empty hours. As we have been explaining to you, your traits and cravings have probably been buried under a mass of habits forced upon you by the world and its people; your early home, your playmates, your first jobs, your employers, your friends, and everything and everybody else outside of you have chipped in something to this vast mold into which you have been poured. Can you ever find yourself? It will depend upon the vigor of your first nature, as well as upon the strength of the mold. If you are a man in fifty million, like Ben Franklin, you will shatter the mold, dissolve yourself into your original ingredients, and then begin to live your own life. If you are not like him, then what?

What if you reach sixty without knowing quite what to do thereafter? Here is a good rule to follow.

You plainly have no strong urges unless they be toward doing something beyond your power at sixty. So you must find, somewhere inside yourself, a relatively weak urge.

Now an urge may be weak simply because it is weak, or because it has been weakened by more powerful urges that have built up a vast web of habits through your middle years. If you can break through this web and find the earlier urge, you may be able to clear the path for it so that it may develop lustily on a medium- or low-energy level.

Start, therefore, with a careful survey of your first twenty years. Take your time, for many events then may be buried deep. Keep notes. Read old newspapers. Talk with old friends. Keep up the good work of excavating until something turns up.

Perhaps your childhood dream was to build your own skis and to go skiing. But, alas, sixty-year-olds cannot be so strenuous. You dig further and find that a weaker but still lusty urge of your high-school days was to build and operate a shop for making furniture. With modern laborsaving devices, you can either build such a shop now, if you can afford it, or you can find some place where you may use lathes and planes and drills a few times a week.

Listen to the brief history of Lulu Belle. Learn how her Best Years are now a peculiar projection of her first childhood. But not in the sense in which we usually take the term. She is not in her second childhood.

Her childhood friends tell me that as a tiny tot she loved to play at keeping store, wrapping up bundles, collecting money from customers. Her father built her a tiny store in the woodshed. There she kept her shelves stocked with funny oddments, from fish bait for the boys up to new heads for old dolls. All the children round about patronized the establishment.

As she grew up, she kept all her birthday and Christmas presents on shelves in full display, just as if she had them up for sale. She still wrapped packages with dainty precision. On week ends she loved to work in the downtown stores, selling things. In her late teens she developed into a hobbyist of deep passion. She collected china figures: china pigs, china dolls, china elephants. No matter how cheap or how ugly, she always bought figures with her spare change and put them on her shelves.

Then she took a job with a small-town lawyer. Her boss's daughter became her dearest pal. Lulu Belle had a certain dainty dignity. And what a wonderful collection of china figures she had! And how beautifully she wrapped bundles! Strange list of virtues! Yet they deeply impressed the younger girl. The boss's wife and neighbors came to

like Lulu Belle too. They gave her figures as presents. Then one woman asked her to buy a few for herself. Lulu Belle shone.

Years passed, and then more years. Lulu Belle grayed. Every month she enlarged her collection, branching out into bronzes and wooden carvings and wee water colors, as she could afford them.

Lulu Belle turned sixty. A tiny annuity she had been buying began to pay off. Her old employer had died. His successor was glad to get rid of the old office secretary. Lulu Belle went out into the world, wondering how she would enjoy her Best Years.

She put her beloved collection of trinkets into dead storage, telling herself that she'd get them out soon, but knowing in her sick little heart that she might never set eyes on them again. Off to Los Angeles she went in a tourist coach. Friends said she could live there cheaply and warm her slowly chilling bones in the sun of an interior valley.

The first year there she worked part time in a city department. While she charmed everybody as usual, she was most unhappy. She changed over, during the second year, to a week-end job in a chain store. It broke her down. She spent five months regaining her strength and starving on her pittance. Then she went the rounds again. But who wanted a thin, sweet woman of sixty-three? She now looked oddly like the Dresden-china dolls packed away in her boxes in the warehouse back East. People don't hire Dresden-china dolls.

Almost a year of hunting and starving. She had resolved to auction off her trinkets. This would be the end.

The sun came out one morning. She took a bus down to the beach, to warm herself. She was growing cold too often. She got off at a boardwalk packed with the semi-

swank souvenir shops you see in every large beach resort. She came to one in whose window hung a sign: SALESLADY WANTED.

She stopped. She eyed the window display. She stared with failing breath. There a dozen china dolls smiled at her. A big ivory elephant brandished his trunk in welcome. Four monkeys on a handle grinned teakwood grins at her. On a higher shelf a lovely set of teacups yearned to serve her.

She walked in. She did not ask the pay. She did not ask the hours. She said simply: "I've come to take the job."

It was a command. The two old folks who owned the shop sized her up in a twinkling. Wouldn't it be amusing to hire a Dresden-china doll to sell Dresden-china dolls?

With her first week's wages, Lulu Belle sent for her boxes of china and bronze and wooden figures.

She's been there for two full years now. Behind the counter she beams at every customer as if he were an angel from heaven. She wraps packages as neatly as she did sixty years ago. She is the picture of health. Good for another hundred years, you'd say.

Lulu Belle came home to herself. She is not in her second childhood. She is in her first. Let the learned laugh as they may. She has found herself.

Some of the learned may say that Lulu Belle must be a very simple soul. Otherwise she could not have reverted to infancy. And so on. I wonder.

I have been watching a great mathematician sail a cat-boat around a little lake. He had as much fun as if he had been a barefoot boy of ten. I have been watching an opera singer walk on his hands and listening to a former Harvard professor recite bawdy jingles in the best tradition of back-house literature. I have been watching a once dashing

colonel of the old United States Regulars turn out beautiful Sheraton chairs in his neatly professional woodworking shop.

I haven't been watching my next Shining Example. He lives too far out in a small interior valley. I never get there. But I've been watching one of his jobs and listening to his customers. He rounds off this passing parade neatly.

He was a small boy in old Detroit when I was a big boy. He went mad over Haynes and Olds and Ford. He was working away as a ten-cent-an-hour helper in machine shops where strange crackpots were trying to make a horse-and-buggy contraption without a horse. The automobile epoch made him rich in a way. Not a billionaire. Not even a ten-millionaire. Just a homely little old couple-of-millionaire. Nothing to speak of, outside of the income-tax bureau, you know.

Time came to quit and have a good time. How? He did not hesitate. He found the warm little valley full of sun and peace and quiet. He built a modest but comfortable little house for an old bachelor. Behind it he built a beauty of a little machine shop. Hardly larger than a monkey wrench. Clean as a fresh baby. As well-organized as the Whisky Lobby. Packed to the roof with every gadget needed for the great purpose.

And the great purpose? Watch carefully, please. The hand is quicker than the eye.

He wandered all over three counties. Whenever he came upon a junk car, he offered its owner a price. The owner usually stared and secretly wondered how the crazy man had escaped from the asylum. Then he grabbed the money before it was too late. Our hero towed the wreck back to his shop. He threw wide-open the big south doors and let the sun stream in. Stripping to his waist, he began his major

operation. No hurry. No time clock now! No foreman to goad the laggard on. This was love at first sight. Not business, mind you. At least, none of your business.

Who set back the clock? Why, here is a boy of ten. What is he doing? He is helping Mr. Olds take apart a horseless carriage. He is borrowing a file from Henry Ford. He whistles as he works. Work, did I say? This is no more work than eating an ice-cream soda.

Not one hand to help hoist the rear end of the wreck. Not one strong arm to help start those rusted valve seats. He is on his own, this boy. But never did a boy work with such gadgets. Here's an electric hoist that cost five hundred dollars. Watch it. And this? A drill press. You can't buy this fellow. I got it from the general manager when I retired. I told him I didn't want a gold watch as a present from the boys in my old department. I told him I wanted that drill press. He grinned and said: "It's an incurable disease, ain't it, Joe?"

A week passes. Out of the shop he drives something. Not the junk he fetched in. No, something else. It purrs. It roars. He steps on the gas, and it leaps up the dirt hill south of the shop as if it were a female kangaroo in quest of her mate. The master rubs his hairy chin, smiles as God did on the seventh day, drives the thing down to a village, takes it into a paint shop, slaps a quart or two of something on the body, and then runs a liner advertisement in the paper over at the county seat. The car is sold before the last copy of the paper comes off the press.

Last week a friend of mine sold him a Pierce Arrow. Palaeontologists date the creature somewhere between the last sabertooth tiger and the first book agent. Sunday, which is only one and one half days gone, a man drove the reconditioned monster up our street, took a stiff hill as easily as Grandma Jenks takes snuff, and sold it at the top

to a gentleman from Denver for five hundred and fifty dollars cash. As our miracle man paid one hundred dollars for the carcass, he kept four hundred and fifty dollars for a good time.

They tell me he has grafted monkey glands onto more than a hundred cars in the last five years. His top price for any wreck is a hundred dollars. Usually he gets ten dollars to haul the remains away. Maybe he averages twenty-five dollars a car at X-marks-the-spot-where-the-crime-occurred. Any cost accountant can figure out the rest. (I can't.) Money no object. We strive to please. Geology has come back. See the prehistoric monsters gallumphing across the landscape. And all because Joe, passionate automobile mechanic for the past half century, is in his first childhood.

Get that clearly. Not in his second childhood. Never a snappier fellow. No mumbling. No sitting around waiting for the end. No echoing baby phrases. No, sir. He's one of the busiest men in the county. And the best junk doctor that ever crossed the Great Divide.

And now back to you.

Lucky Joe, say you. But alas, you did nothing when young that you can revive and pursue earnestly. Very well, look next to early play and early sport. What did you most enjoy before twenty? Go as far back as you can. Swimming? Yes, but often it's too hard for a man of sixty. Baseball? Also too hard. But how you used to play marbles! You were the neighborhood champion. Later you became school champion and got your name in the newspapers. All right, then, try marbles again. Or, better yet, find some more complex game that uses at least part of the skills you used in playing marbles.

You may soon be playing pool or billiards. Or you may invent a new game, a sort of super-marbles, and make money on it as well as get fun out of it. But however you

develop the childhood habit, you will pass from a mechanical (and perhaps dull) repeating of it over to an amused tolerance and so on to a zestful hobby.

Take no man's advice as to which hobby to pursue. Seek your own answer in your own past. The further back, the better. It will sound strange, I know, but yet there is a sense in which every man should live over his childhood. In childhood you are yourself, though not yet full-grown. When full-grown, you go lost under the hot lava of the volcano named Sex. No man is quite himself throughout these years. He is only the vehicle of a cosmic force that drives on and on. But after fifty, the erotic urge fails, or weakens greatly; and then once more the man becomes himself. He is now an extension of what he was before the erotic force burned him up. He is no longer an animal in heat. He is himself. And his Best Years are going to be those in which he makes the most of his own nature.

Life is a balancing of many forces. The more and the greater these are, the less the sex drive dominates the field. What has just been said, then, applies most clearly and most surely to people with only an average number of cravings and abilities. We are now going to consider the problem of gifted people, and we shall see at once that they must go about discovering their best work for the Best Years in quite a different manner.

To benefit from the psychological law about to be stated, you do not have to be a genius. You need only be well above the average man in some accomplishment, be it higher mathematics or the saxophone. The further you are above that average, the more marked will be the phenomenon I call "clustering."

The stronger a trait, the less likely it is to be solitary. It seems to be the center of some web, or solar system, of atomic dimensions; the greater its energy, the greater its

mass and the larger the field of force it dominates. (Perhaps it *is* such a field of force.) It holds within their orbits other lesser traits. These gain power somehow from being in this field of force. They surpass traits outside the field.

You may gain as much as I have from Lewis M. Terman's prolonged investigation of gifted children and geniuses. This Stanford psychologist has thrown a flood of light on the traits of childhood and their persistence throughout later years. Although he was not considering the bearing of his facts upon middle-age behavior, he found much of value to us. How much? We cannot yet say. But we know that there is no sharp and hard line between the gifted and the giftless. Every degree of energy, persistence, and spread of interests and versatility appears all along the line. So we are safe in assuming that nearly all readers who had intellectual and other gifts in childhood can in some measure draw on Terman for suggestions as to what they might best be doing after they retire; and also that readers of small abilities in childhood may at least pick up a hint here and there as to the way such powers might be employed.

The one person who can gain nothing from Terman is the wholly giftless. But he will not have read thus far, so we need not worry about him. So on with a brief sketch of Terman's discoveries. Begin with the genius in his childhood.

The genius shows "persistence of motive and effort, confidence in his ability, and great strength of character." Although gossips often say that he was a backward child, he never has been; but he may have created this bad impression because he was different from common children and often could not get along with his teacher or classmates.

His early interests often point toward the field in which he achieves much, *but not always*. He is versatile always; so

he may have had many interests in childhood that never got a chance to develop. The odds are strong that he has shown better than average ability in from five to ten fields.

One of Terman's students established a curious fact. He analyzed three hundred geniuses and measured the spread of versatility according to their fields of highest achievement. Here is a little list of correlations packed with meaning for older people less gifted.

Eminent writers of nonfiction are the most versatile of all; they often excel in ten fields.

Statesmen and philosophers rank second.

Religious leaders, scholars, scientists, poets, novelists, dramatists, and mathematicians rank third.

Musicians rank lowest, and usually far below everybody else. They come closest to being single-track minds.

Take this personally. Apply it to yourself as you seek some part-time activity after fifty. Before you start, learn the correlations. It is striking that a person who excels in one activity is likeliest to be well above average in certain other fixed activities. We have here natural groups.

The strongest group consists of abilities in science, mathematics, invention, and handwork.

The second strongest consists of poetry, novels, and drama.

The third strongest consists of philosophy, social theory, history, and languages.

The fourth group consists of religious leadership, politics, and administration.

Music stands alone. No group of abilities clusters around any musical ability.

Now you have a valuable aid to plotting your Best Years. How use it?

Find the group most closely related to the abilities you

have been using in your lifework up to fifty. Then look through all forms of part-time work within the group. Test each that appeals to you. Give preference, in this test, to the abilities that you may have shown in childhood, or in early youth.

The more conspicuously you excelled in any ability of a given group, the likelier it will be that you will find something to do somewhere within the group containing that ability.

The less you excelled, the less useful this test becomes. If you did not excel at all, don't bother with the test. It may be harmful.

Be sure to understand that two distinct trends merge here. One is the trend toward "clustering." The other is the trend toward spread. They are, in a fashion, opposed; hence you may easily become confused as you apply them to your own case. So I shall work out a hypothetical problem or two.

What if you are a distinguished author of essays, histories, political articles, and other nonfictional writings? Then you are likely to be highly versatile. You may easily turn your hand to any of five or more unrelated activities. Hence, as you pass fifty-five, you may try out many things and find yourself more than pleased with most of them. Lucky devil!

On the other hand, you come off third-best when you analyze your "cluster" of abilities. You belong to the group whose linked trends run toward philosophy, social theory, history, and languages. These merge somewhat in the successful nonfiction writer. But they are not strongly linked. So you need not be surprised to find that you have little aptitude for philosophizing, or for social theorizing. The odds are that you might do better with these than with

other activities such as handwork and invention. But you might not excel to the point of throwing yourself into them as you taper off.

What if you are a chemist with a long record of excellent research? Now you rank third-best in versatility. You are down with the religious leaders, the scholars, the poets, and the novelists. You may find only a few things you can do outside of chemistry. But those few are tightly knit. You rank top in the "clustering." And it is easy to see why. A good chemist has to excel in mathematics. He has to have considerable inventiveness too, for much research is largely guessing and the devising of new ways of tackling problems. Then, too, he must be rather good in handwork, at least so far as the sort of handwork goes that he uses in setting up new machines and instruments in his laboratory.

We should not be surprised, then, to find that you will discover it natural and pleasant to take up some new science, or to go in for pure mathematics, or to invent devices, or to take up some handicraft. For these abilities must have been well integrated with your skills as a chemist for many years. After fifty-five you may taper off into fields calling for less energy, but for the same skills you have always had.

Last of all, let us suppose that you have always played first cello in a good orchestra and have perhaps written a few pretty good sonatas and ballads. Now you reach fifty-five and begin to feel a slight stiffening of the fingers and dimming eyesight, with perhaps just a little dulling of hearing. You cannot go on much longer with the orchestra. So what?

Your music cannot guide you to any new field. It stands alone. It has no linkage with anything else. A musician may be anything else or nothing else. He is the complete opposite of a chemist. His skills are self-contained. They float

free. So it happens that a person may excel as a musician and yet be anything else: an imbecile or a brilliant mathematician; a psychopath or a saint; a sexual pervert or a virtuous monk; a social parasite or an altruist. Unfortunately, too, he may be a genius in music and absolutely nothing else. When he has to give up his music, he ends himself. His is a single-track mind. He has nowhere else to go. Have you ever seen aged musicians who are lost souls? Then you know what all this means.

What practical lessons shall we draw here? Beware of encouraging children to go into music as a career unless you see to it that they start early to develop other interests that, in time, may absorb them and so serve to bolster their old age. As for old musicians, encourage them to try everything at least once before giving up after fifty-five. They may hit on something nobody could ever have guessed.

Remember, please, that all these statements express probabilities and nothing more. Do not apply them too strictly to yourself. They may fail. You may prove an exception to the general trend. To women readers I should add a special warning: Your deeper abilities may have escaped you when you married, or when you devoted yourselves to your parents. The dull habits of housewifery may hide you from yourselves. Hence you may err in rating yourselves. Only the woman who has had a fair chance to prove what is in her can make good use of these slightly confusing principles.

If she can find her first childhood, let her revive and enlarge it. Thus will she escape the terrible ailment known as second childhood.

Come Early, Stay Late

THE MORE you had to start life with, the more you'll have to round it off after sixty. (We overlook accidents and epidemics.)

The earlier a trait unfolded in childhood, the later it will go on blossoming. (We forget disasters.)

Here is one of the most remarkable trends of life. It helps us all in determining what to do late in life.

Forget everything you learned when young about minds and bodies after forty. Forget everything you ever learned more than ten or twelve years ago about minds and bodies after sixty. Only in the last decade did investigators tackle the problems of older people. They had worked long on babies and children and youths. Finally they pushed on to the people past forty. And what strange new facts they turned up!

I am going to tell you about one discovery, but I shall have to tell you first about a fairly well-recognized life principle upon which the new fact rests. It is the principle of pace. (Physiologists and biologists have a long, fancy Greek word for it. I prefer neat English.)

Each creature comes into the world with a certain fund of energy which is set by little understood mechanisms to be released at a fixed rate and hence, in the muscles, at a fixed speed of response. The mechanisms work somewhat

like a thermostat that turns on more heat as the room grows colder and less heat when the temperature rises. Again, they are like the automatic devices in the newer cars which open the throttle as the grade or the load makes going harder, and close the throttle when the car coasts down-grade. In short, they adjust the flow to the power requirement of the moment, and thus the pace holds steady.

Now this pacing mechanism works fairly well for the varying energy funds available at various ages of man. The older a person grows, the more slowly he walks in his pace. True, he can spurt. But spurting grows harder and harder; and the time comes when he cannot spurt at all, except at grave danger to his heart.

It is easy to see how seriously a man's habits can clash with his pace. This clash becomes one of the toughest problems in the readjusting of affairs after sixty. A habit has its own pace and its own pattern. When formed, it probably drew on the energy fund no more than pace allowed. But as the years go by, the fund drops. Then the pace drops. But the habit doesn't, at least not in many people. And soon we find an old habit tapping a man's energy dangerously.

You know what happens. A young man learns golf and comes to love it. It keeps him fit through his twenties and thirties. Around forty his energy fund declines, so his pace falls just a little. But he still plays golf as always. At first he finds he grows just a little tired. Then he has to sit down at the ninth hole for half an hour and pant. Then he lies down two or three times. Finally he quits halfway around. He is more sensible than his companion, whose old habits dominate his conduct. This unhappy creature drives himself onward and ever onward over the course until at length his heart gives way, and the coroner calls it death from natural causes. But we know better. The natural

thing to have done would have been to keep away from the golf course.

Sometime between forty and fifty most people must begin to revise their habits so as to fit their lower pace and dwindling fund of energy. A person must understand that "he is no longer the man he once was." He must not weep over it, unless he wants to weep over his living so long. The drop is absolutely normal. He must not throw out his chest with braggadocio and shout that he can go around the links just as fast as thirty years ago. That marks him as a fool. A man of fifty is not a ten-year-old plus forty years. He is another animal. He has totally different protoplasm and cells.

How use this law of life in choosing what to do after sixty? I have shown you the first rules: Remodel your habits to your new pace, take it easy by way of playing safe, take a hundred thousand vacations, relax, and acquire a serene mood.

All this is an old story. Now for the new.

The earlier any trait, other than one built into the large muscles, hits its pace at a high level, the longer it is likely to keep going, if not at the same pace then at one well above the general average. "Come early, stay late." And, broadly speaking without any pretense at great precision, we may say too that the smaller the amount of energy required to drive the structures involved in the trait, the longer the trait functions. Notice how these two trends interact to exempt the large muscles.

The large muscles take much energy. So they slow down as one comes close to forty and may lose many functions thereafter. Prizefighters and wrestlers and hundred-yard-dash champions have to turn to less strenuous activities long before forty. However superior the muscle traits were at first, they do not last long.

Small muscles use little energy. Hence even a small increment in energy available drives them vigorously for a long time. Some of the highest mental traits take so little energy that men can scarcely measure it. So they go on and on forever.

Observe the law of "Come early, stay late" at its clearest. A boy displays lively creative imagination in his tenth year. He is likely to show it when eighty. If, however, he is a grand-opera singer at fifteen, he may no longer be one at fifty. It cannot take more than one one-millionth as much energy to carry on a fantasy as to sing opera.

A boy displays creative imagination for the first time when twenty. Odds are that he will show it little or not at all after fifty. What comes late goes early.

Here is a symbolic diagram to show all this. It is *not* a graph drawn to any scale.

The life span of any creature runs between five and six times as long as the time it required to reach maturity. In men we find some people maturing around the fifteenth year, while a few seem to take twenty years for the job. Thus the shortest probable life span would be five times fifteen, or seventy-five years, and the longest would be six times twenty, or 120 years. Thus we include easily the ordinary threescore-years-and-ten multitude along with the rare Methuselahs who reach birthdays past the century mark. We shall find today a huge group falling between the octogenarians and the centenarians. For statistical purposes, we shall take 100 years as a life span. Many biologists believe that 100 years is the actual life span, but we shall make no assumptions here. We use 100 merely as a convenient way of presenting one of life's most baffling laws.

This diagram applies only to traits not using many calories over considerable periods. The smaller the muscles used, the more strictly the trait follows this schematic pat-

tern. It is most accurate as a description of traits like creative imagination and judgment.

In reading the diagram, always keep in mind that the length of the line represents the level of mental abilities *as a whole*. The longer the line, the higher this level.

In purely symbolic fashion, the lines all have their middle point at 50. This is to show you that the earlier a person gets under way, the abler he is likely to be and so the longer he is likely to remain active.

Nobody ever gets under way before 10, so schematically nobody remains active after 90. Here the symbol happens to agree with fact.

Nobody, so far as I know, gets under way as late as 40; so the symbol fails the fact here, as nobody ends wholly at 60, save through disease or accident.

Here is Booth Tarkington, still writing good books at seventy-four. Since he passed sixty he has turned out sixteen novels. And he still has a clear memory to help me out with more Shining Examples. He reminds me that William Dean Howells wrote what Tarkington himself thinks was the finest of all Howells' English after he was eighty. He tells me that James Whitcomb Riley was going strong all through his sixties. He brings to my mind also that the three giants of the American stage during the last century, Joseph Jefferson, Otis Skinner, and John Drew, all shone in their green old age. Add to Tarkington's recollections the fact that all these men started early and showed their talents in youth and we have scored our point.

Here's Carl Seashore, distinguished psychologist, who tells me modestly that he has written three books since he turned seventy, which was ten years ago. But *Who's Who in America* shows he has written five in that time. Of course he finds it hard to recall: he does so much, such as playing golf in every state of the Union except Delaware

since sixty. So far as I can learn, he is the only man on earth who has retired three times. As I was finishing the proofs of this book, he wrote me that his third retirement began that very week. But, he added: "I shall not suffer for lack of work in years to come. There is a backlog for thirty more years."

Here's John Dewey, our outstanding philosopher, who will influence men for many years to come. Since seventy he has written ten books, at least one of them of immense importance and two more only a little less significant. He is now eighty-seven and occasionally writes me a letter in handwriting as clear and as firm as forty years ago.

These men got under way early and with boyish vigor. So their great traits stay late.

Men have no monopoly here. We must cite a few women. And the first one must be the ideal.

A good ideal is like a star by which the sailor sets his course. However far he sails, he never reaches the star, but he comes to his journey's end safely. An ideal is unattainable. It defines a line of action, a course of conduct. And so we take as an ideal for many but not for all women the amazing Dr. Lillien J. Martin. She became, in her day, a pioneer in three fields. The first was consulting psychology, the second was child guidance, and the third was the care of the aged. She started out as a chemist and taught chemistry and general science in the Indianapolis High School. She dropped this work cold and went to Germany to study psychology, then a new science of fair but uncertain promise. She came back to a professorship at Stanford and soon made ten fresh contributions to psychological research.

She retired at sixty-five. Then she began her great work, as well as her great play. She believed openly in breaking sharply with one's past and in tackling something new, to

keep one supple. So she opened the first mental-hygiene clinic for preschool children in San Francisco. The age factors in mental hygiene absorbed her more and more, and she wrote over twenty-five articles and books on the subject. In the midst of this writing, she launched her old-age clinic, now world-famous.

She set her mind on keeping young. She used all the skills known in her day. She learned to use a typewriter at sixty-five. Ten years later she made a trip around the world. When seventy-nine she went to Russia, alone and unaided. Just before that trip she learned to drive an automobile. At eighty-one, she traveled for seven weeks around Mexico, with only a mechanic to help her. At eighty-eight she made a tour around South America and finished off with a journey up the Amazon.

Friends say that her life followed the pattern of gifted children outlined by Terman and briefly reported earlier in this book. As a small child, she was always eager to try new things, always restless, always eager. She learned fast. She had vast versatility. She had a wonderful temperament. She learned quickly from her own failures and remained undaunted, no matter how often she failed. She would try anything once.

So she died as young as she was born. Age ninety-two. And all through those years, she was born every morning.

A star to steer by, good ladies all. You'll never reach it. But if you steer by it, you'll come to a good port. Dr. Martin had an amazingly good inheritance. Unlike most of us, she used what she had to the utmost. And the more she used it, the better it treated her.

Next a lady much closer to most readers, not an ideal but just a Shining Example. Go thou and be like her. Or even better.

In 1877, a twelve-year-old girl was preaching to the

rather bewildered citizens of the East End of London. To attain proper elevation, she stood on a chair. Her eloquence stirred all listeners.

In 1945, this orator reached her eightieth birthday. She is still full of fire and simple eloquence. Her name is Evangeline Booth. She is as ageless as the Salvation Army, which she headed. "I feel very young," she says with a smile. "I have a young heart and, I think, the agility of a young brain," she confessed with sparkling eyes.

Who starts early keeps going until late.

When a small boy, Bernard M. Baruch loved to box, and a little later he became a young pugilist. Time marches on. A ruffian hopped out of a taxicab in Fifth Avenue and tried to knock the block off an elderly gentleman. The elderly gentleman knocked the block off the ruffian who began knocking off blocks. Yes, it was Baruch.

Who starts early keeps going until late. And now we may draw the moral of these tales. How can you use this important law of life?

Recall what I said about second childhood? Take it to heart. I had this law in mind when I garbled the phrase. As you ponder what to be doing after sixty, go back into your first childhood. Seek there the traits that first burst forth in action. For the moment, pay no attention to your likes and dislikes. Think only of the year in your childhood when you first exhibited the traits. Now consider all traits that came to light, let us say before you were twelve. Try to select one to serve as the basis for your life after sixty.

You are going to be surprised.

People born with lively traits and cravings should make or inherit a million or two when very young, so that they can get under way promptly and hold their pace until very old. This is the ideal life. It is my only argument in favor of millionaires.

The chief glory of wealth is its power to free you from doing things others want so that you may do what you like. What a book might be written around the smart rich who got out of the rut early and lived their own lives! My own version of that chronicle would glitter, even if badly written.

It would tell of Edward Page, once a wealthy dry-goods merchant, who pulled out in his early fifties, built a magnificent library, with residence attached, employed several research aides, and settled down to divide his time intelligently among half a dozen activities. He became one of the most influential men in organizing New Jersey's pioneer system of putting feeble-minded people to work and making asylums like country clubs, free from all bars and guards. He ran a great dairy farm. He worked on the codes of business ethics for the New York Merchants' Association. He traveled far and wide. But his center of interest lay within his library. There he pursued economic problems and, among other things, helped one of his sons to become a professional economist.

My book would tell of E. W. Scripps, one of America's greatest newspaper leaders, who from the time he made a sizable fortune in Cleveland followed strictly the rule here laid down of taking a hundred thousand vacations in a lifetime. He would get into a small boat, sail out into Lake Erie, and forget to report to the office for one day, two, or even three. When his partners protested, he said that he did better work for the papers by thinking things over alone than by sitting in an office listening to the babble of nincompoops. He had a low idea of those who worked hard according to the time clock. He retired as fast as he could, which was early, and spent more and more time over studies and travel and the meeting of people he deemed worth listening to. If nobody else will endorse the prin-

ciples set forth in these pages, I shall invoke the ghost of Scripps. He'll write a testimonial.

My book will tell the story of another rich man who is still running his own astronomical observatory and turning in valid reports to two societies regularly; of a former newspaperwoman who inherited a modest fortune from her husband a few years ago and has since been running a tiny chemical laboratory, where she employs three clever women to work away at a certain problem in plastics which I cannot even state intelligently; and, on toward the end of the book, I'd tell about Daisy.

Daisy is Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, now seventy-five and as spry as the first lark of a summer dawn. Did ever a woman make better use of her wealth?

When nearly seventy, she was appointed American Minister to Norway. So she learned to ski. When she reached Norway, Hitler was boring from within. She gave the Nazi gang as bitter a headache as they ever got, before she had to sneak out through the woods, two jumps ahead of the wolves. Hitler met his match in this former criminologist. Yes, she was just that. Few know that she put in twelve years of her early life managing the women's state prison at Bedford Hills, New York. More know that in World War I she took five hundred Red Cross women to France and stuck by a dirty job to the end.

Now she's a great-grandmother and just warming up. What next? Well, she's organizing a world league around the atomic bomb. Write her for details. She's only seventy-five years old as the almanac runs, and in her life this makes her about sweet sixteen, I'd say. Sweet, anyhow.

Please draw the right moral from these Shining Examples. They combine talents and drive with wealth. So they were able to start early and stay late. Some fine day after the Atomic Age reaches its fuller bloom, nobody will have

to work much, everybody will be able to buy whatever he wants, as nothing will cost much, and then we shall have a golden age that will make the Age of Pericles a thing of brass.

Use It or Lose It

USE it or lose it. Obey this law of nature, especially after fifty. It reigns supreme over all habits shaped primarily by circumstances. It rules with a strictly limited sovereignty over the deep native urges that you bring with you into the world.

A man may sometimes revive a native trait that has lain dormant for half a lifetime. But after fifty he has a slim chance of bringing back an ordinary habit. And it is of the habit that we now speak: not the native impulse to talk or to write, but the finished skill of speaking before large audiences or writing novels; not the original quickness in catching one's balance and being free from dizziness in high places, but the acrobat's professional grace in walking the slack wire.

The longer you use the precise co-ordinations of a workaday habit, the longer the habit persists after you neglect it. It may not be perfect, but it is still usable many years later. Thus with the eighty-year-old patient of Dr. Carl D. Camp, who has been specializing in the ailments of the senile. This man glibly repeated from memory rows of twelve numbers even after having attended to other matters for several minutes. Dr. Camp observed many signs of senility in the man's eyes and skin and bones. How could he show a memory so superior to that of ordinary people?

Well, until ten years previously he had been a baggage master. He had memorized baggage-check numbers every day for over thirty years. He stopped this at seventy, when he retired. The habit still worked smoothly when he reached eighty.

I have watched a seventy-year-old take up cabinet-making after five years away from tools and shop. Within a day or two, all the fine skills came back. During the war, as many a reader can testify, astonishing comebacks in old men and women opened the eyes of young workers. At Port Hueneme a woman nearly eighty took over a secret rush order of finishing parachutes. She had to manage a score of deft girls and work herself too. In her active years she had worked in a textile mill, where she became nimble with eye and finger. After fifteen years of idleness, she snapped back within a week or two. A locomotive engineer of seventy-six who had been retired for twelve years took over a switchyard and handled more tonnage than ever in his long life, most of it in a black-out too. These were commonplace cases between Pearl Harbor and Nagasaki. Hundreds of men and women long past sixty rushed back into jobs, some of them much harder than any they had ever filled before. But in each case I have been able to investigate, the successful workers used very old habits of work.

"Practice makes perfect," says the copybook. No doubt. But practice also keeps you alive and under way. So every student of human nature as well as all wise doctors since Galen agree on the wisdom of steady practice.

"Employment is Nature's best physician and is essential to human happiness." So wrote Galen, in the year A.D. 172.

My old friend J. Russell Smith, who is writing what he calls "a batch of geographies" in his seventy-second year, tells me about a gentleman who, as he puts it, "has just gone into the disease business." He hadn't been retired on a most

liberal pension for more than a week when he began to inspect himself from head to foot daily. He was growing old. He had better check up on the old machine. Maybe a nut was loose somewhere, or a bolt rusted through. He watched every dish at every meal. Is it right to eat this? Is it safe to take a second cup of coffee? He measured every walk he took. Ought he walk two miles on such a hot day? Ought he walk at all in a snowstorm? He studied his tongue. He analyzed his complexion. He weighed himself daily. He saw his doctor twice a month, his dentist so often that the man almost bit him. He invested in a home warehouse of pills, tablets, powders, plasters, eyedrops, tweezers, absorbent cotton, vaseline, antibaldness ointments, brushes and sprays.

By this time he was a total wreck, breaking to pieces on the sands of time. Then his former associates came to the rescue. They invented a crisis in his old business. They implored him to come and help them out. Reluctantly, as if tottering to his tomb, our hero went. He resumed his old work, expecting every day to be his last on earth.

After eight months, we see him again. He is now pretty well, thank you. Have a dry Martini?

Listen to this observant Briton. He was, until he retired, on the staff of Lloyd's Register of Shipping, in London. His associates led busy lives right up to noon of their sixtieth birthdays; then they would take their pay and retire. Just like that. Swoosh!

"The next morning," says the Briton, "it rains just a little. So they get up, take breakfast, and then go for a long walk. Thus for a week or two. Then one morning it is pouring. They get up, look out of the window, and take no walk. A few months later comes a week of rain. They stop taking a walk. They sit down for a while. Then they lie down. And then somebody carries them out."

From anybody else, this might come forth as poetry. But not from a Lloyd's man. He kept records. So did his friends. The records showed, after more than ten years, that the average healthy man who retires from Lloyd's Register is dead at sixty-three.

Now and then a penurious fellow leaves with his retiring pay and goes to work in a shipyard. Of course any such establishment always has a door open for a man from Lloyd's Register, which is the British Bible of the shipping industry. He violates all the traditions and standards of a worthy English gentleman, of course; but somehow he thrives until far past seventy. And this raises the question as to whether it is better to die a gentleman, or thrive as a cad.

Don't take all this to mean that folks who stay home when it rains die at sixty-three just because they stay home when it rains; or that folks who go to work in shipyards live until seventy because they work in shipyards. Take it to mean rather that people who allow a hard rain to stop them cold have seeds of decay in them. Take it to mean that men who take jobs after retiring are full of life and so destined to a green old age. But do not let this reasoning be fatalistic.

Forewarned is forearmed. Understand that if you try to kill time, it will kill you, in time. And then act accordingly. Understand the iron law of life: Use it or lose it. Then act accordingly. Understand that he who retires to a full stop is soon ready for interment. Then act accordingly.

Every psychiatrist of importance has long made all this known to patients.

"Go right on doing the things you have been accustomed to do—and then add a few more tricks." Thus Dr. Bernard Sachs, formerly president of the New York Academy of Medicine and one of the country's ablest neurologists for a long generation. Just before his eightieth birthday he added:

"Keep on doing. Keep on planning. Never depend upon

other people unless you have to. Keep the mind active."

He was still practicing what he preached when he passed eighty-six.

The most dangerous act after one passes fifty is to sit down and say: "Well, now I'm through."

In a jiffy you will be through. Wholly through.

So we reach a strange conclusion which many readers may, at first, find hard. There are two kinds of lucky people: one has an inner urge to keep on doing something, the other has an outer compulsion. The unluckiest of all are the people who have neither urge nor compulsion. They stay home when it rains.

Genius and poverty are the heavenly twins of yore. Since man began, genius has furnished the inner urge while poverty has been the outer compulsion that has kept people busy and so well. Now it is easy—if not fashionable—to deride anybody who praises poverty on any grounds. But it is not easy to find a substitute for poverty as a means of keeping people alive and well late in life.

Poverty is evil. Who dares praise it? But it happens to be one of the two most powerful stimulants. It leads to the best of results in thousands of cases. I am, of course, not speaking of coolie pauperdom in which men gnaw crusts and fade away to living skeletons. I speak only of that gray state known as subsistence, in which men have just enough to eat and drink and wear, but not a whit more. Subsistence does not enfeeble its victims. It enrages them. It bestirs them to rise above the mire. And so it ranks next only to war as a stimulant to great deeds. It is the immoral equivalent of war. William James sought a moral equivalent. He did not find one. It does not exist, alas.

James and many of his followers of later days have supposed that we might find the equivalent in some noble inner urge. But all those who have toiled long over children and

laborers and elderly people agree that most people, regardless of age or education, have little more inner urge to do anything than a cobblestone has. Just to round this matter off, I consulted the few companies I could find who make a serious effort to follow the activities and welfare of their own retired pensioners. It was the same old story: About 95 out of every 100 sit around, play solitaire, try a go at shuffleboard, put in an hour at checkers, sit in the park and watch the world go by, attend movies and baseball games, and potter away rather feebly at sundry hobbies. The old machine has been put in dead storage. No wonder the cylinders gum up and the battery goes dead!

I called on a brilliant psychiatrist to watch him operate the latest model of electroencephalograph. As I waited in the large outer room, a patient came in and sat down beside me. Somehow we got to chatting about the clinic's latest work therapy.

"We don't want work therapy." The man grew suspiciously sullen. "We want work."

Somehow this man sensed the difference between real work and pretend work. And the latter didn't quite satisfy him. He must have felt differently when under a genuine outer compulsion. He must also have learned to like it. Why shouldn't he? It may have drawn more fully on his powers than anything else could.

Any second-rate fascist can twist all this to mean that the upper classes must sedulously force the faces of the poor against the grindstone, for the good of the paupers. Any fourth-rate realist of democratic inclinations can find it in its correct meaning: We must train everybody, from his sixth year onward, to be up and doing. Long before sixty such a person will have an inner self-starter that will send him out into the rain, if not into a shipyard, on the slightest pretext.

The Disease of Ease

EASE often becomes disease. Every psychiatrist, save only a handful of the older men, is familiar with the strange plague. Ease softens us a trifle at first. Being pleasant, we give way to it. Prolonged, it softens us much. In time, it makes us impotent in the face of hardship.

The first step toward the disease of ease is taking things too easy. Not taking hard tasks easy. That's an art to be mastered. No, the danger sets in when people just let down softly and allow the days and months to slither away in green slime. Like Ada.

Ada is the wife of an old locomotive engineer who is away from home for three days of every week, on his runs west of Denver. In her mid-fifties, she finds herself alone for most of the stretch. She has three children who have grown up and gone away to work and to school. How fill in those empty hours?

"Time is my luxury," she says.

A wonderful line, that. Ada is a deft phraser.

"After Joe leaves for his three-day run," says she, "I spend as much time as I can over each task. I get fun out of stretching even the simplest jobs. When I was young and foolish, I used to finish sweeping the parlor in twenty minutes. Now, with long practice, I stretch the job to an hour. If I had to, I could prepare my lunch in half an hour. I al-

ways take three times as long now. So, by taking it easy, I manage to have considerable unfinished work on my hands when Joe comes back. You see, I never have to sit around with nothing to do. It's wonderful."

I wonder. Ada doesn't realize how much of her soul she reveals. Lucky woman! She'd be hurt if she understood that this trick of using as much time as she can over every task would have occurred only to a person whose head and heart were empty. Terrified at the prospect of having to say to herself, "Well, what can I do now?" she fills her day with an hour of honest work.

This is a clever trick in a painfully limited woman. Psychologists should study it closely, for I suspect it will turn out to be far commoner than anybody has supposed. It is an ingredient of much laziness. It is like the passion for haggling that possesses so many peddlers and small shopkeepers all over the world. These poor fellows are pained when a customer pays the price asked without a murmur and walks off with the goods. The shop is now empty and silent. The little salesmen must sit alone and still. They do not like empty time. Better be filled with little nothings and with nothings of no size at all. So they love to haggle and haggle and haggle. So passes the day. So passes life.

Could we penetrate the masks that hide workers the world over, I am sure we'd find millions who dawdle over their jobs not to cheat their bosses, not because the work is too hard, not because they are tired, but simply because they must fill in time. They dare not be idle. They dare not look up from their workbenches and see only themselves. What Thoreau called "quiet desperation" drives people to spread their work thinly. With them, time is not a luxury, but a bitter necessity as a screen to hide them from themselves. So it is with Ada, but she will never admit it.

We schemed to reduce the strain of hard work. We in-

vented labor-saving devices. We improved teamwork and shop methods to the point at which we are now turning out from three to twenty times as many goods in an hour of toil as the other people of this world. And then what? We fall sick. It is the disease of ease. Some of us sit around and stare. Some cut paper dolls. Some lie down and die. Some go Ada's way and take an hour to do a minute's task. Time is their luxury at first. It soon becomes their poison.

A national magazine, some little time ago, asked thousands of readers how they used their leisure.

In reading, said some. In fancy work and dressmaking, said others. Still other readers said at the movies, watching sports, and listening to the radio.

The editors did not mention that the great majority of these readers are in their twenties and thirties. Young folks, yet all using their free time sitting on their pretty little tails. The only activity apart from eyes and ears is working a needle with one's fingers as one fashions a doily or mends a party gown.

Passive sports and passive pleasures have stultified minds and enfeebled bodies everywhere. Cholera and bubonic plague never wrought worse havoc than the disease of ease.

A biologist who forbids me to mention his name tells me that these millions of sitters must be inferior in their racial stock. They are, says he, culls. No robust person, especially in the twenties and thirties, would be content with sitting around and doing things pleasantly. Bodies that prefer this when young are certainly cull bodies, he says.

"A healthy person of good stock," he goes on, "would behave more nearly like a man I greatly admire. This gentleman retired rather early in life from the hurly-burly of war. He went to live on a farm in Virginia. After a few years there, he began writing gloomy letters to friends. He

was sure that his life had ended. He often mentioned 'my approaching decay.'

"Then came signs of war out of Europe. The Army begged him to come back. He did. He did a fine job and was credited by some people with the headwork that won the war. He retired with considerable honor at the age of 52.

"Soon he was moaning again over his own dreadful state. He said in one letter: 'I am descending the hill . . . and soon expect to be entombed in the mansion of my fathers.' He sank into melancholia. His family and the physicians despaired. Then, years later, along came the next war. This was far more terrible than the earlier one. Again the Army begged him to resume command. He had the sound animal instinct to accept. Considering his 'approaching decay,' which had set in many years earlier, he did a pretty good job."

My reporter eye glistened.

"I must interview him for this book," said I. "Where can I find him?"

"He won't talk," said the biologist. "He was George Washington. You know, the first President of the United States."

"I'll put him in the book, anyhow."

Yes, he belongs here. For he tried to stop using the best that was in him, once, twice, thrice. And the disease of ease laid him low. A life of ease on his lovely farm poisoned his whole mind and body. Only work rid his system of the poison. At an age when most men of his time retired, he undertook his greatest enterprise.

"Oh," cry the sitters, "we can't be like him! He was a genius."

"No more a genius than you," I reply. "In fact, a rather stodgy businessman. But he was a healthy animal. He rebelled against ease."

The ordinary man of good health works to keep alive. I

called him lucky. Washington worked as a warrior in war-time; and I told you that war is the only moral equivalent of poverty I know. Men work best when in danger. So the question is this: How find the right danger to get the best results? Shall we accept the oldest of all dangers, the danger of starving? Shall we face the danger of slavery and death on the battlefield? Not if we can find some less terrible substitute.

Thus far I find no adequate one. The best seem fitted only to certain kinds of minds. They are:

Work done for mere exercise.

Work done to fulfill responsibilities.

Work done to cure, to alleviate or to prevent ailments.

Work done under regimentation.

Work done for some cause that enthuses the worker.

A glance at each.

Exercise is wonderful for thousands of people. Do not belittle it. But be on guard against its misuse. After sixty, take it in small doses. Allow for the slow pickup after spurts. Allow for overloads. And then go ahead to your heart's content.

Responsibilities may fill the Best Years admirably for other thousands. But only under one condition: The older people who carry them must have learned to remain serene and untroubled. The common man finds sure death in many obligations he cannot fulfill. And those he can fulfill grow fewer as he grows older. From all such overtaking duties he must be free.

To discharge responsibilities well, a man must measure up to them in every respect; he must also understand them and like them, at least a little. In measuring yourself against a responsibility, use the same old rules already repeated and again to be repeated: Make just allowances for spurts and overloads. Beware of assuming work in which you may

find yourself alone with a task for two men or caught in a trap from which you can escape only by fast moving. Energy, as usual, is your handicap here.

Most fortunate the man who has responsibilities he likes and can carry well.

Fortunate the man who has responsibilities he likes and handles passably, even though with hard work.

Much less fortunate the man with responsibilities he dislikes, even though he discharges them with skill.

Unlucky the man who dislikes his responsibilities and fails with them.

Most wretched of all, though, is the man with no responsibilities and no clear wishes about responsibilities he might assume.

No slapdash, hit-and-miss assigning of duties to all sorts of people who are tapering off after fifty is possible. The intelligence, the experience, the temperament, and the moral habits of each individual figure decisively in each assignment. This matter lies therefore wholly outside of the public domain. No Government will succeed with any program of imposing even light duties on the multitude.

If a person cannot find his own responsibilities, who are we to lead him to them? We would only lead him to our responsibilities, not to his.

The simplest responsibility a man may have is toward himself. He must take the well-being of body and mind as a perennial duty. He must devote to these as much time and energy as they require. If they require too much, they interfere with other tasks and may become a curse. If they call for no attention, they make the man irresponsible just to this extent; and out of this may grow greater irresponsibilities. There is a golden mean here. Let a friend of mine demonstrate it.

I interrupted him on his way to play golf.

"How do you do it?" I asked.

"With stomach ulcers and asthma," said he, trying out a driver in the air.

"I never tried them for golf," said I. "Once I tried a low-grade heart. It wasn't good. Do you suppose I could exchange it for stomach ulcers and asthma?"

"Might do." He teed up.

"Before you go on, please tell me how these are aids to golf work."

"They're just traffic lights. Red lights in the traffic of living. I've had stomach ulcers for forty years and asthma for eighteen. Terrible nuisances, both. I've always had to take care of myself. I couldn't neglect anything. I attribute my present good health to them."

Totally healthy people are unlucky, except in the early years. They never get a fair chance to build up habits of caution and self-care. So they come into the later years unprepared for the changes and the vicissitudes. Thousands who deem themselves less lucky are truly more so. For they have lengthened their lives and enjoyed their Best Years as a result of many stern habits of caring for bad eyes or lungs or throats or sinuses or hearts or bowels or feet.

How many youths have died early, or lived to a miserable old age, because they suffered from "incurable health"? This affliction has not escaped the doctor's eye. I use a good medical name for it. The healthiest man I ever knew in my own youth used to pose as perfection in medical schools. He regularly got a small fee for showing his teeth off to the astounded students in the dental clinics. His was the only flawless mouthful of teeth around. At forty he was fading. At fifty he was a miserable, cringing dotard unable to endure even a cold. He lacked all habits of caring for himself.

It's smart to be imperfect.

Work done under regimentation is, so far as America

goes, fanciful. But it has often been enforced elsewhere, from the earliest times. The Fascists and the Nazis revived it in the grand manner. You may imagine it in some grotesque Utopia, where fanatical hygienists gain power to command all older people to go to work for one to four hours a day in public workshops, or be shot at sunrise. Need we spend time over this? I think not. But let it be recorded as a possibility.

Work done for some cause which enthuses the worker will, in all probability, appeal only to the few; perhaps to no more than two or three in every hundred people past fifty. As people grow older, you know, they grow more and more themselves. They lose interest in most causes. They do as they like, which is usually little. Then, too, causes weary them. Running around, talking with people, delivering speeches, running campaigns, and heading parades: these are tasks of rugged youngsters.

Nevertheless, I believe that a slowly swelling trickle of people will devote the Best Years more and more to those causes which they can promote without undue exertion. Older people will find in the troubles of our juvenile society many tasks best performed by themselves. They will grow indignant at the failures of younger people to improve the schools, and to prevent juvenile delinquency, and to shut up the useless reformatories and prisons, and to counsel the young in the common trials of growing up. They will discern their own natural domain of duty and so will take it over.

Of this, more later.

Keep Ahead of the Times

THROUGH the active middle years, a man must keep up with the world. When he begins to taper off after fifty, he is in danger of falling behind; and the time may come when he sits down and watches the world go by. The world moves ever faster. With the coming of the Atomic Age, it may outrun the swiftest of us. It already has, but some of us may still catch up with it.

The danger the retired man faces is that of going around in a horse and buggy on a six-lane automobile highway during traffic hours. It is the danger of a man shooting with bow and arrow at an enemy who blazes back with a Tommy gun. It is the danger of a man who shouts at people two miles away while others use their walkie-talkies.

Lavender and old lace are charming, in their proper setting, which is twilight in the Old Ladies' Home. They cramp a lady's style when she tries to race against grandmothers in shorts. Going out of style may be harmless, as a matter of mere appearances; but when one goes out of style by sticking to old ideas, old habits, old haunts, old language, old mannerisms, and old jobs, one thereby goes out of competition.

This is the perpetual menace of retiring. The sooner the retiring person faces it and copes with it, the better. A physician retires firmly resolved to spend at least a day a week

in some research or special practice, perhaps at a clinic in a near-by large city. What if he has never used penicillin? Now that he is a part-timer, would he do well to carry on in the good old way? Shall he refuse to use the mold? He gets an emergency call to a spot he can reach only by helicopter. There is a helicopter service. He can get there in half an hour. Shall he stick to his old car and wind around mountain roads for hours? The patient will then be dead perhaps. Many young doctors carry walkie-talkies in their cars (or the radiophones now being built in on order). They talk with patients, with other doctors, with hospital nurses, with pharmacists, as the need arises. Shall our retired M.D. snort at such frills? Shall he keep out of touch with the world while he drives over those winding mountain roads for four hours? Well, if he does, he will soon be laid on the shelf, and not too tenderly, by indignant people who cannot endure pre-Atomic ways.

The plain truth is that retired people ought to strive harder than anybody else to keep up to date. They may well be able to increase their effective powers tremendously by keeping one or two jumps ahead of younger people and, at the same time, get twice or thrice as much accomplished in an hour as the younger people do in two. Technology is the retired man's greatest boon. For it reduces the time and the toil of all jobs, as well as doing many new things nobody can do without special devices. People who have the physical strength may well bumble along with brawn. But men and women who must make every burst of energy count to the utmost simply must use every newest invention and method.

After fifty, you must keep ahead of your times with the utmost skill and scruple. Take to heart that wonderful remark of Charles F. Kettering, who at seventy puzzled some

friends with his intense interest in scientific problems that a hundred men could not solve in as many lifetimes.

"Why shouldn't I be interested in the future? I'm going to live in it."

Yes, we all live in the future. Even those who love to live in the past cannot. They have to face the next minute. They have to make up their minds whether they shall carry umbrellas or not. They have to pay bills on the first of next month. Above all, they have to find ways and means of getting things done, often on a dwindling fund of physical powers.

"The future belongs to youth." How easy to accept the old saying! How hard to avoid the fallacy of inferring that older people have no future! It is obviously true that the elders are always turning affairs over to the younger. But this does not imply that the elders may ignore or neglect tomorrow. Everybody belongs to the future, and the future belongs to everybody. To some in one measure, and to others in another measure.

In the long run, the scientists are going to improve the second half of life far more than the first. Thus far, they have done more for children. But researches concerning degenerative diseases and senility and the conserving of energies late in life are multiplying; results already appear, some of them startling, and a few bold scientists have, for the past ten years, been declaring that before long thousands of people will be living in excellent health far beyond the century mark.

After fifty, the intelligent man will keep in touch with all such advances. He will also use them. Thus he will be able and eager to carry on his affairs actively. But he must do one more thing if he is to make the most of the years. He must take his mind off his childhood, off his college

days, off his gay thirties and roaring forties, off everything save the future. He must shift his attention and his interests to the future in which he is going to live and, we hope, thrive.

Why?

I wish I could give a fair and full answer. Nobody can. Yet the truth is sure and solid and deep. The elixir of youth is always around the next corner. It is in a bottle we always reach for but never grasp. It is a bottle that bears the label WHAT NEXT?

The instant a man faces his next hour and attacks its problems, he patterns his whole body and his mind in a manner I can describe generally only with the feeblest of words. It eludes language. He "gets set, gets ready, and goes." The tensing for the leap somehow releases immense energies somewhere at the top of the nervous system. The mere getting ready and going stimulate every gland and every muscle and every organ. How? How little anybody knows!

The surest thing we know, of course, is that *in facing the past, you cannot use your muscles normally, if at all; but in facing a real situation you use them as they are designed to be used.* In a manner of speaking, all backward looking is imperfect because it is partial, involving the brain alone. Creatures are designed to deal with their surroundings. They change these, or they change themselves to fit things around themselves. This calls for action. Action is a matter of movement. Movement is a matter of muscle.

Now there is a strange fact about muscle. Physiologists have long known it. Not one other person in a thousand has ever heard it, still less understood it. At some risk, I shall try to make it clear. *Every muscle fiber acts as a substation for the heart. It is, among other things, a tiny pump. Its pumping enables the heart to carry its enormous and relent-*

less load of pumping blood to every least part of the body.

At first glance, this doesn't mean much, does it? Look further. Think longer.

A muscle fiber contracts. It forces blood out of itself and so on along the line of march to the extremities of the body, where it is then returned to the heart by other muscle fibers there. The muscle fiber at another time remains still, either lax or tense as the case may be. Then it does not pump blood. So the burden of pumping falls elsewhere. It may fall on other fibers. But if many of these are also resting or tense, the burden falls on the heart. But that is not all. Blood standing still develops poisons. Much argument has been raised as to what the poisons are and just how they operate; we need not go into that troublous issue, for the fact of poisoning is unchallenged. However the poisons work, they at least slow down or prevent many life processes.

One of the greatest discoveries of the past quarter century is that "rest is a disease." I quote the brilliant phrase of Dr. Karl Bowman, president of the American Psychiatric Association. The whole treatment of the sick has been revised as a result of this discovery. It is now the best practice of thousands of physicians to compel patients to move around just as early as they can do so without danger. Wounds heal much faster in patients who sit up, stand on their feet, and walk around a little a few hours or, at most, a day or two after surgical operations.

Healing depends upon the flow of blood through a wound or a diseased part. The more muscle fibers are kept pumping blood, the faster blood flows through the injured parts. Hence the faster one gets well. Hence the strange phenomenon. The longer sick people stay in bed, the longer they take to get well. I cannot complain if you find this hard to believe. But it has been proved by scores of scientists who have worked on tens of thousands of sick people

having all sorts of ailments. There are a few diseases, such as tuberculosis, which usually do not respond to this new method, and for reasons well known to physicians. But on the whole, the new rule, "Get up and get well," stands, a milestone that also marks a great turn in the long upgrade way to robust longevity.

Let the sick man loaf in bed and enjoy the luxury of rest with good hospital service. What then? Usually one of two things. (But not always.) The heart may be permanently weakened by the overload. All its substations may have gone out of business. The heart is not designed to carry on alone. If it is not strained to breaking point, then another thing occurs: It pumps very slowly, so that the blood slows down and stagnates in the extremities, chiefly in the ankles and feet, but sometimes also in the hands. As it comes to a near stop, the blood forms clots of microscopic size that, because there is no force in the stream, stick to the walls of the veins and arterioles. As the clots break loose, they are carried to other parts of the body, sooner or later; and then they may stick in the finer passages of the brain or the heart or some other organ and cause quick death. This is only one of several processes taking place in the broken-down pumping system. But it is the most striking as well as the commonest.

Now let us connect all this with your keeping ahead of the times. Any long rest is evil. It shortens life. It prolongs illness, except in a few rare cases. One of the greatest disasters that ever befell our country started when a certain Dr. Weir Mitchell, of Philadelphia, began prescribing total rest for almost everything from corns and bunions up to paranoia. Americans fell like suckers for the rest cure. They still fall for it. And so they have succumbed to scores of degenerative diseases and to mental decay on a much grander

scale than other people. The disease of rest finally kills them. But the coroners call it something else.

Total rest in bed, especially on your back, is by far the worst of all rest. Yet all rest that is not strictly recuperating from an immediately preceding exertion is evil. Resting after an hour of hard work is necessary for about ten minutes and may not harm you if you prolong it to twenty; but beyond twenty, have a care! Even in sleep, the normal man does not rest more than ten minutes in any one position. Healthy slumber is restless. The man who sleeps like a log worries every modern doctor. We now know that all healthy sleepers move violently and change their positions at least twenty times in a night. Some people change fifty times and awaken saying that they slept heavily. They did, too.

After fifty, people with dwindling energies are sorely tempted to loaf in bed or in hammocks, to loll around in armchairs, to sink into reverie and recall the good old days, or to read books endlessly, often cramping their bodies as they do so. Such partial rests cause only partial upsets of the blood-pumping system; and if they are thoughtfully controlled, they may work little lasting harm. But as the habit of resting grows on one, it becomes a disease; and in time you may have to call in the doctor.

Any tendency toward doing less and resting more is bad. But it is not bad to fit actions to available energies and to extend rest according to genuine fatigue. *The trouble begins the instant you rest because you have nothing to do.*

I offer a simple specimen. Alonzo is now sixty-one. He used to lead a strenuous life, made considerable money, lost much of it, salvaged enough to keep him in comfort forever on a modest level of bachelorhood. He has no serious sickness, but is oversensitive to raw winters; so he lives on the Pacific Coast, now here, now there, but always on the end

of a fisherman's wharf during daylight. His routine is iron.

Around nine o'clock he arrives at the wharf in an old car, takes out a folding chair, a raincoat, and fishing tackle. He walks out to his favorite spot and settles down for the day. After an hour or two of fishless fishing, he props his feet up on the heavy guardrail of the wharf and dozes, first having made fast his fishline, just in case a white shark comes along. Around noon he nibbles lunch and sometimes moves to another spot. Around five o'clock, he goes home, sometimes with four or five little fish. Fatigued with the day's strain, he goes to bed early and slumbers a full ten or eleven hours.

Alonzo sees his crackpot doctor three times a week. He isn't well. Maybe he is working too hard. The doctor adheres to a wacky cult. He prescribes this and that. Alonzo gulps the dope and goes back to the wharf. I give him a few more years.

I give you a second specimen. May North, aged sixty, has been mostly lying on a lovely divan reading romantic novels and comic strips. She has plenty of everything but sense. Her brain is in the red. Too fat by some thirty pounds, she sleeps on her back for ten hours, according to her lithe and lively sister Jane, who is already counting up the funeral expenses. She complains of swollen ankles, one of the surest symptoms of a general strike in the substations of the pumping system. To listen to her, you'd think she had passed her ninetieth birthday. Every attempt to make her get up and take a walk fails. Yet she is no more sick than a fire hydrant is.

It may be too late now to save her. But it wasn't four years ago, when I told her sister to frame a bankruptcy or something else that would make the fat old fool think she had to go to work. A year in a hand laundry might have made a woman of her.

Now the easy way to be up and doing is to face the

world hungrily. Have an incentive for solving the problems of the hour. Without a genuine incentive, you can do nothing much. The surest incentive is hunger. A gnawing stomach can lash the most sluggish of us into keen action. Next strongest is poverty of the kind that denies you the good things you've been accustomed to, but does not totally starve you. The right measure of poverty will surely keep you ahead of the times at least by a few hours; and that is quite enough to deliver you from the disease of rest. You get busy. You have to repeat the act of getting busy, in order to get ever more of the things you crave for decent living.

People who have nothing are to be pitied. People who have a little but not enough are to be envied. People who have everything may be either the most unfortunate or the most blessed; for if they have no inner resources and hence no urge to keep ahead of the times, they decay early; but if they have inner resources and, like Charles Kettering, keep plugging away with strong enthusiasm at whatever they like, then their wealth aids them and speeds them on their way. As usual, money is bad for the worthless and good for the superior.

Few people have strong inner resources of the kind needed to keep ahead of the times. Most tend to sink back into reverie, or into vapid pleasures, as soon as they can. There is more of the vegetable in man than any self-respecting carrot likes to believe. For every Kettering you find ten thousand miniature-golfers, bridge addicts, shuffleboarders, boozers, and plain dolts.

This is not nature. It is mostly nurture. Stupid teachers have caused most of this widespread defect. In time better schooling will be devised. It will begin around the sixth year and it will never end. It will be just as thorough with pupils of ninety. Learning and living will merge. Neither

will precede or follow the other. For all living should be learning; all learning should be living.

However it may be worked out in detail, this schooling will persistently train people of all ages to keep ahead of the times. Perhaps an hour ahead. Perhaps a year ahead. But always ahead, never behind. It may go so far as to forbid social reminiscing, such as we now encourage in the form of alumni banquets at which old graduates bawl college songs of other days and recount how they tied a mule in the church choir loft. The reliving of old times ought to call for capital punishment. It is a form of suicide not to be encouraged. All useless reminiscing is a form of incipient involution; and involution is the blight of old age.

The Blizzard Men of 1888 stand for everything that this book doesn't. Do you know them? In New York City alone they number seven hundred. They have a society. It meets annually, I understand. At it, the members spend the evening recalling those days of wind and snow and ice. Then they drink a toast or two and depart for the Bronx and Brooklyn. The tie that binds is just one snowstorm. Once a year everybody turns back the clock and turns on the memory spigot. Do you know a more perfect futility? I don't. I once did, but my futility is no more. It was a Society of College Yellmasters. You could join it only after proof that you had originated a college yell, or at least had been one of the committee that originated one. I forget the dues.

Apply these remarks to yourself. I cannot. Keep in mind a simple fact: Men turn backward chiefly because they lack incentives to turn forward. They begin to die as soon as they lose the drive to live. The first sign of losing this drive is the backward sigh, the reverie of the good old times. Not a serious symptom if it occurs only once a year and lasts for only a minute. But ominous if long and frequent.

Stay in Circulation

JIM got off the train and walked up the main street of the town to which he was hoping to retire. A pleasant place. Clean and spacious, its leisurely streets smiled at him as no street ever had smiled back in Chicago, where he had worked for thirty-four years. Yes, here he would stay, if he could. But could he?

Up in his little hotel room he spread out his papers and his bank book for the hundredth time and fell to figuring. He might tarry here for six months without finding any part-time work. Then he would have to move on. His pension wasn't enough to support him properly. And he wanted to work anyhow, at least a day or two every week. He didn't intend to rot.

He found a comfortable room with an old lady from Des Moines. And a few hours later, he began his campaign to stay in circulation. It was just that, and he knew it. He talked it over with his landlady. She caught on at once and filled both ears.

Jim went to the Chamber of Commerce and got a list of all the civic-welfare societies and charities. He visited each and offered his services free for two days a week. Yes, free. He wanted to be doing something worth while.

One wan and withered old man came within an inch of

hugging him. They had been hoping for just such a benefactor. Start in tomorrow.

Jim started. Part of his work was calling on businessmen for small contributions to help finish two or three small city improvements that had cost a trifle more than the estimates had shown. He asked such a small sum from each person that he had little trouble in collecting the needed total. Whenever he found a man with free time, he chatted and got to know more about the town and its people. Back at the office, he wrote down everything he learned, and before long he had a thick book of facts.

Later he organized a pageant, then a parade, then an amateur play, then a mass meeting to consider a proposal for enlarging an airport. He was not a glib speaker. He had never organized anything larger than the staff of a small retail store. But somehow he got by. His good nature often made up for certain defects and errors.

Then came the turn of the tide. He came to know people interested in city and county planning. They sold him on it. He wasted little time. He fell to studying the whole business. He read everything on it in the public library. He had the librarian get more books on the subject. He threshed out problems with two men and a woman who had been long working in the field. He drew up experimental plans and had these friends tear them to shreds. Out of the shreds he wove a better pattern.

War came. The county offices lost half of their staffs. They needed a man to fill in. Jim showed up in the nick of time and got the job. Within a year he persuaded officials that he would serve best in the county planning department.

There he got the job he had dreamed of. He is now in its third year, successful and happy. What was his trick? You know it.

He kept himself in circulation until people accepted him

as coin of the realm. He refused to retire to a park bench. He found that the easy road to new friendships and work ran through welfare work.

The darkest danger of the Best Years, the thing that may turn them from best to worst, is the loss of all friends and acquaintances. People die, you know. Others move away. Others drop you. As they disappear, your opportunities dwindle. For most men keep in touch with affairs and trends through friends. Left alone, what can you do? Only one thing: Find more friends, build up new circles of business acquaintances, and resume your old role in them. Accept your solitude and though you may enjoy it, as I happen to, you will not find it good business. You will, I regret to say, find it very bad business.

Only rare freaks can succeed in solitude these days. Beware of their example.

Is it not simple common sense to guard against this loss of contemporaries by building up a circle of acquaintances among younger people? Surely I shouldn't have to advise anybody to do this. Yet thousands of men and women reach sixty in the still despair of loneliness and do nothing to end it. All of them, save a few victims of terrible misfortune, have mostly themselves to blame. To enjoy their Best Years, they have done too little, too late.

Do not make friends with people a few years your juniors to the exclusion of all others. Make friends with people in all the early decades of life, all the way back to babies. Swim in the full current of life's stream.

In dealing with younger people, particularly with teenage boys and girls, you must keep in mind the dangerous difference between this rising generation and your own. That difference results from two things: better education and bitter experiences.

Education heightens the differences between the bright

learner and the less bright. So, as schools improve and reach more and more pupils, the ablest push ahead fastest, while the least able lag farther behind. How shocking to people of your age ! They fancied that if only we educated everybody, everybody would become alike. But just the reverse happens. The best aren't like the worst nor the worst up to the best. Each learner progresses according to his inner pace and his native competence. So in the end we find an astonishing variety of minds and skills.

Today the ablest young people are vastly abler than the ablest of your own school days. We tried to bring this to pass, didn't we? And didn't we succeed? Today, by the same process, the least able are just like their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers. We have at least two societies today, however hard we try to ignore it or deny it. Maybe we have three or four; we can't be sure. But certainly we do not have one homogeneous people.

Bitter experiences have improved the abler and harmed the common run. Some have lived through two world wars and a terrible depression, learning death and torture and poverty and fraud and treachery as never any earlier age did. Others have only lived through one world war and now are caught up in the fever of inflation and boom and whatever the modern equivalent of jazz is. The able young make the most of their knowledge and opportunities; they are going to control the Atomic Age, of course. The less able go in for whisky and whores, as usual.

You may find it hard to stay in circulation among these younger folks. For the clever may find you a bore, while the common may scorn you for rejecting their whisky and whores. It may become embarrassing at times. But your gravest peril will arise from your applying to these folks the methods of a bygone day. You have your own habits of dealing with people, they have theirs. At times this

difference is as great as that between the etiquette of the Arab and that of the Dane. Why shouldn't it be? After all, the age in which you grew up has hardly any resemblance to the Atomic Age. And you are like all older persons: You imagine that your way is the one and only way, the right way, the natural way. Men always rationalize their own habits thus. So you do your best, with never a suspicion that it may be the worst for those on the receiving end.

Beware of doing some things well-meaning, but simple, advisers have recommended. A few of the rules may work, now and then, with people of your own age; but they will bring you only trouble with everybody else.

Don't write a letter to a younger friend assuring him that you recall him with pleasure and can never forget something he once did for you. Such a letter is pretty certain to arouse suspicion in the younger mind. It comes out of the blue. It is apropos of nothing at all. Hence it must be a prelude to a touch; the old-timer wants to borrow money. Oh, hum.

Don't send letters, sometimes with enclosed clippings, to a younger person you know to be more important than you. It is so obvious that a clever recipient senses its shoddiness at once. It is only a trick. Don't be a trickster.

Don't shop around for some trinket or for flowers to send to a younger person, unless there is some manifest occasion for the deed. Young people nowadays have functional minds. Acts that have no function arouse their suspicions. And why shouldn't they? I'd have suspected anybody in my youth whom I caught going through the motions of some cut-and-dried method of winning friends and influencing people.

Don't make up a list of all the birthdays and anniversaries of younger friends and then send them presents or letters

or telegrams. It may seem to click for a while, but in time you will learn that most younger folks shake their heads over you in private.

Get fixed in your mind the immense realism and the tough minds of the able young people of the Atomic Age. When you were young, not one boy or girl in a thousand saw through people as these youngsters do. A whole generation of people drilled in popular psychology has grown up along with you. For the past fifty years, hundreds of writers—some able, some charlatans—have been instructing the young in human motives, in social behavior, in Freud and in less famous psychoanalysts, in Adler and in a score of modern psychiatrists, as well as in the common trickeries of getting results as salesmen or as managers or as foremen or as generals or as politicians.

Today's youth, if intelligent, knows more about the workings of the human mind than William James ever did. How so? Well, he has had the benefit of all that James ever learned and passed on to the next generation. He also has enjoyed the lore of a hundred other men all as able, in their own fields, as James was in his. It should be so if education is genuine. Each later generation must profit from all its forebears can hand on to it. Its ablest members do just this.

The common youth, to be sure, is not wise. He is just common, as usual. He knows nothing of human nature that his ancestors of a thousand years ago didn't know. On him, therefore, it is safe to pull all the ancient tricks of making friends and influencing people. They work. They will always work. If you know young people well enough to distinguish the able from the majority, you may set up two systems of approach. Otherwise, beware of the old approach. You are taking terrible chances of becoming the

laughingstock of the crowd. And what could be more horrible?

To keep fit, you must, as we have said over and over again, stay in circulation and keep ahead of the times. This usually forces you to be much with young people.

Here lies danger. You will be tempted to keep up with youngsters on hikes and in dance halls. That will soon end you. What then? Common sense gives the answer.

Be yourself, of course. Be your age. Don't run with the herd. Sit down and watch it run. Let the young understand that your one and only inferiority is in the heart and in the big muscles and in the lungs. Your oxygen turnover is down.

Never apologize for this physical weakness. A man might as well apologize for being five feet seven inches tall. And if some young braggart displays his prowess too insolently, call his attention to the fact that any amateur springbok can outjump him and any young gibbon swing farther and faster on a trapeze.

Assert your sure superiority inoffensively—that is, unnoticeably. Find what is troubling young people. Talk it over with them, slipping in ideas here and there which they may pounce upon and soon be claiming as their own.

Tell stories about people and affairs that have a useful bearing on young troubles. Let each tale point its own moral. Do not preach.

Keep away from gatherings of youngsters where you are not wanted. And don't feel hurt.

Find out what youngsters like to have you do with them and for them. Then do it. It may be nothing more than providing a clean barn loft for a rainy day, or your tennis court on Saturdays. No matter.

Don't talk with youngsters about your sorrows and trou-

bles. Laugh and the world laughs with you; weep, and you weep alone, as usual. Talk about young interests. And, as far as lies within your powers, pursue them too.

Talk much about tomorrow and the day after. Make plans. A plan that falls through is better than no plan at all.

Ask youngsters about events in their world. What is happening that excites them? Follow up with this, according to what you hear. Cautiously make forecasts. Watch the young eyes widen as they see them come true. If you know that only the southwesterlies bring rain, show off that knowledge at the right time and place; and tell your listeners that with the wind blowing out of the north, there'll be no rain for at least three days. This fascinates intelligent boys and girls. It always lifts you in their esteem. (But don't tell them the moon will drop into the Pacific Ocean next Thursday.)

Whenever possible, be proud of your age and its blessings. This will change young opinions of you fast. The young are like their elders in that they take people first of all on their own appraisal. If you show that you think poorly of yourself at sixty, be sure that the boys and girls will think poorly of you too.

One of the surest ways of creating the impression that you think poorly of yourself is to sit on all side lines, a passive spectator of the deeds and play and games of the young. As the boys and girls glimpse you out of the corners of their eyes, they will murmur: "Poor old man! All he can do is to sit and watch the world go by!" You are what you do, not what you say.

So, with the young, do what Jim did with the whole town, beginning with his first day there. Offer to do something. Maybe you can only umpire baseball games or keep

score on the grandstand board. Then do that. For the least deed is a trillion times bigger than no deed at all. Maybe you can teach a class in woodworking at the evening vocational high school. Do it, even if you slice a piece off your thumb with a chisel, every Thursday at 8 P.M. A slice off your thumb is a slice of life anyhow. Maybe you can do what a man I know did: You can organize a gang of juvenile gardeners to weed and hoe gardens after school hours and all day Saturday, at fair wages. This man now makes twice as much as he gets from a pension. Maybe you are expert in cleaning old paintings and antique draperies and you can teach some young fellows the tricks and then have them pick up orders around town. Maybe you can . . . Oh why go on? There are several million more maybes. The nation's supply of book paper is still low.

To keep in circulation, never organize a debating club of contemporaries and, twice a month, discuss questions like these:

Could Noah have lived as long as Methuselah if it hadn't been for the Flood?

Shall we oil our creaking joints with axle grease or with butter?

Who is the more distinguished nonagenarian, Senator Taft or Virgil Jordan?

Should a man eat hot mince pie with one foot in the grave?

Never sit on porches facing the setting sun and discussing the good old days when men were men.

Never repeat your best stories to a dinner club made up of men and women who were telling these same stories shortly after the panic of 1893.

Never sprain an ankle hurrying to join the parade of Old

Home Week celebrants. Sprain it chasing a foul ball in the championship game between the Raggedy Rangers and the Bungtown Business College nine.

Do I make myself clear?

Best Part Time of All

RECALL a few facts on which this book is built. The first years must be spent in growing up. Youth goes to the erotic drive. So do the first decades of adult life. The middle years go to making a living and getting established. The later years should then be devoted to living one's own life. As man is a creature of infinite variety, he must live his own life in many ways, each of his own choosing. He is no longer the sullen schoolboy whipped to school; no longer the humble underling in a mighty corporation full of time clocks. He is himself again, for better or for worse. The wiser he is, the more widely he spreads his energies over all his cravings. Part time for travel, part time for books, part time for folks, part time for thinking, part time for anything else he craves. And so, in time, he comes around to the best part time of all for those of keener wit and wider experience: He applies himself to the endless task of helping the younger generation manage and improve the world. This he accomplishes partly by work but mostly by counseling. And so he fulfills the ancient ideal.

The higher his early abilities, the longer they must out. "Come early, stay late." Remember that? The wiser he is, the later he must go on using his wisdom. He has no choice. He has only an urge. If he blocks it, it will turn and rend

him. He must stay in circulation. And so he must also keep ahead of the times.

Any able observer of sixty sees, with half an eye, that our country moves ahead slowly over a rocky road chiefly as a result of the animal individualism of most people under sixty. We are not cynical. We are biologists. We point only to easily verifiable events and conditions.

No child under ten has ever had a thought or done a deed that improved social conditions. (You may define "social conditions" as broadly as you wish.) All he can do centers around growing up and getting animal bearings in an animal world. Children are not people, as some misguided mothers suppose. They are only on their way to becoming people, with luck.

No youth or maid under twenty ever made the slightest contribution to any social problem, great or small, so far as I can learn after long inquiry. A few have started crusades and wars. But these helped nobody, unless it be the camp followers. The mind of youth, as the poet puts it, lightly turns to thoughts of love. As the biologist puts it, the body of youth hotly seethes with urgent sex, so he has no mind worth mentioning.

Most people (but not all, by any means) in their thirties are so deeply absorbed in reproduction that they have few thoughts and fewer activities helpful to their fellows. Most people in their forties and fifties are so absorbed with money-making and improving their own homes and getting promotions and moving in the best circles that not one in a hundred gives a sizable part of his time toiling for the improvement of anything except what may yield him a quick profit. Join a taxpayers' league and work for lower taxes? Oh, yes. With joy. Work to control juvenile delinquents or the whisky traffic? Oh, no. I'm too busy.

Doubt this? Do as I did. Run down all the people who

spend as much as two hours a day, year in and year out, on some cause beside that of making money or climbing up one rung of the social ladder. How many do you find? I cannot count up even one in a hundred. I ask the leaders of an organization how many members give time and hard work to the cause. They tell me. I calculate that there are 34 million Americans in the fourth and fifth decades of life; so I'd have to find 340,000 active workers for causes other than personal. But I can't find even a quarter million. Maybe I don't know where to look.

If, then, the forward-looking organizations cannot find workers under sixty, they'll have to find them in the older ranks, or not at all. Thus far, many of them have found them not at all. Again I quote:

"The top is getting higher and higher. Few engineers under sixty can even visualize some of the new problems that come to us, let alone solve them. But our offices are flooded with bright young men who can handle smaller assignments beautifully and fast." Thus the head of a New England research institution who refused to be named.

We enter the Atomic Age shorthanded at the top. Plenty of doughfoots. Plenty of chorus girls. But not enough men and women who can handle tasks that will lead to the greatest civilization of all time.

"We have a hundred projects on the shelf, and nobody to work on them."

So spoke the president of one of our greatest chemical companies a few weeks after Japan surrendered. A few months later, prominent manufacturers of textiles and rubber and a leading food processor told me the same sad story. They added that, without the swift developing of enterprises in hand, millions of workers would surely be idle within another two years.

One person out of every five who is competent to handle

any sort of research is over fifty. See the national roster. Every such older person ought now be planning half-time work for his Best Years. To lure him on, let's repeat our old, old story. After sixty, he can learn as well as earlier, though more slowly; and, after a time, he'll retain what he has learned much better. His work will not fatigue him seriously if he plans well. His experience and judgment and responsibility will improve as he grows older. Scores of the ablest scientists are in their seventies.

Most research is readily subdivided into minute tasks, many of which call for no gross muscular exertion. Older men and women can therefore handle these admirably. They continue with undiminished skill in mathematics and similar calculations until extreme old age. And even if such skills weaken, they can still find special tasks within their powers.

For the properly trained man, especially the doctor, medical research on a part-time basis opens up dazzling opportunities. These have been increased tenfold by the release of atomic energy.

The physician with sound scientific training and some means (be they his own, or a special gift) can find endless problems in the ailments and mentality of people older than forty. Nearly all investigators have been working on the unborn, babies, children, young mothers, and young adults. Hardly a thought has been given to what a man or a woman should eat after forty, or after fifty, or after sixty, or after seventy, or after eighty. Who has investigated ways and means of correcting the almost universal decline after fifty in a person's speed and skill in adjusting to very warm or very cold weather? This is one of the commonest causes of death in the late middle years and in old age. Yet nobody seems to have given it more than a casual glance. Who has looked into methods of controlling

the so-called waterlogging of aged tissues? A few. But thousands should have been hard at the mystery. What can be done to slow down the aging in each of a thousand different tissues? A few have done brilliant work here, but oh, so little!

The sciences of the second half of life have hardly begun. The techniques of handling people after fifty are still to be developed. The institutions for keeping people after seventy vigorous and cheerful and ambitious have not yet been built. No, not even the blueprints are ready. So we stand at the end of a long night, looking forward and wondering when dawn will break.

It will break. We know that. For the problems are not half so stubborn as many others which men have solved. We are not going to breed men who live a thousand years and a day. But we are surely going to bring a better life to him who now mopes over his approaching decline.

Who must bring this? Why, you physicians now tapering off. Why not? Soon you will be sixty, then seventy, then eighty. You learn best before you have to use what you learn. Get busy!

Even a round hundred of able research men might change the whole flavor of life after sixty. Probably half of the hundred would find how the degenerative diseases of late life arise and how they can be either prevented or controlled. Probably, too, many would find ways of using atomic energy, along the lines already laid down by pioneers in cancer research. They may confirm the opinion of some leaders in medical research that the use of smashed atoms in medicine will overshadow their use in industry.

Few physicians are trained for scientific research. What may they do to enjoy their Best Years? We harp on the same old harpstring. Taper off. Don't quit. Steal from work as much time as you want for your own sweet pleasure,

but stay in circulation. Everybody knows we suffer from a shortage of good doctors, except in a few big cities.

In almost any community a retired physician can take on as much or as little medical work as he wishes. He may handle charity patients. He may assist in clinics. He may take over the secretaryship of the local medical society. He may do library work, such as preparing digests of important articles in medical journals. He may take over certain work from hospital staff members who want to go away on vacation. He may handle local statistics, so that physicians can grasp the trends in their community as to health and diseases.

The country suffers from a grave shortage of doctors and hospital-staff specialists. It will continue to suffer for years. So a doctor who is about to retire will be rendering a solid service to the community where he retires by helping out the clinics and hospitals. In most places the men in charge will gladly allow the newcomer to put in as much or as little time as he wishes.

Most urgent of all, right now, is the home care of injured veterans. At the close of 1945 the Veterans' Administration completed a contract with Michigan physicians for the treatment of veterans in homes or in local hospitals. The task could not be well handled by central staffs. One of the surest ways to improve first the mind and then the body of a wounded man is to let him go home and live in his familiar surroundings with friends. The Michigan Medical Society eagerly signed the contract because it knew that men would recover faster and better back in Michigan.

Physicians are now overworked. Many would welcome part-time helpers, especially men of good record and repute. You might retire to Florida for the winter and go North to a Michigan lake resort for your summers. During

the wonderful months in the Northland, you might take over the practice of small-town doctors, if you wanted much work; or you might take over the care of veterans in a seventy-five-mile radius. Fit the work to your own needs and wishes. Fish three days a week and help the wounded for the rest of the time. Fish six days a week and help them on the seventh. It's your life, not mine to pattern.

Again, stay in your home town if it pleases you more, and become a medical counselor. This is almost a new profession, but one which a seasoned older man with M.D. behind his name can take over on five minutes' notice. After a month at it, you'll wonder why you didn't think of it years ago.

Here and there you see medical counselors. Usually they work in hospitals. Staff physicians give them records of patients. They instruct the counselors as to what to do with each sick person. If, for example, the patient has come for an operation, the counselor explains whatever the patient must understand in order to come through easily. Almost always the counselor talks over diet and rest. He does what he can to stop worry, too. He brings in friends. He gathers news from the patient's family and from his business, to convince him that he may remain in bed until he is well without any harm to his outside interests.

After the operation, the counselor makes clear the course of recovery, which is pretty sure to be much faster than the patient had imagined. Carrying out orders, the counselor encourages him to move around in bed, and to get up and take a few steps, and then to sit up, in order to stimulate his whole body and hasten its return to normal behavior. As convalescence advances, the counselor may encourage the patient to read valuable books and to discuss matters that are on his mind. All this is sound elementary psychi-

etry. The patient gets his troubles off his chest and also gets out into the clear on matters about which, as a well person, he would not talk.

Well over a million sick people lie in hospital beds every day. They stay there, on the average, for just under a fortnight. Maybe one lively counselor could handle a score a day, but I doubt it. Were he to work three days a week, he'd have a profitable career for later years. In time there may be jobs for fifty thousand or more half-time counselors, I think.

Suppose all the hospitals in your town have counselors. Then what? Well, you might look into your county, or the next one. Odds are about one to three that you live in one that sorely needs your services and can pay you something for them too. Odds run better than even that some county within an hour's drive wants you at once.

Some twelve hundred counties in the United States lack full-time public-health services. Many are too poor to support such. But why not consider the appointing of several retired physicians and nurses to handle the full-time work of one man, and at salaries totaling much less than what a full-time man would demand?

True, many of the counties cannot find such retired professionals within their borders. And others cannot lure such workers. But most probably can work out some program that would draw on the older retired people. For instance, why not work on a state basis? Get together a volunteer staff of retired physicians who live within the state and can travel occasionally? Why not send them to the counties that need help, when, as, and if needed? It's all a matter of intelligent planning. Nothing more.

Suppose nobody wants you in hospital or county or state. Must you sigh and pick up your golf bag and stroll over to the first hole, to await old Colonel Higgup and his

caddie? I think not. Your field still swarms with opportunities, many of them fresh as tomorrow's milk. Ever hear of industrial psychiatry?

Psychiatrists who have been investigating the professional shortages lately declare that we need ten thousand more men in this difficult field at once. They tell us that more and more large industries are employing psychiatrists who inspect and treat complainers, workers with delusions, quarrel breeders, and other twisted personalities. They find that many of the troubles industrialists run into with workers start with those having diseased, warped, or shocked minds.

Does this not suggest an opportunity for the psychiatrist and physician who want to taper off? Why not seek part-time work in some large factory? Or better, in a group of factories in some large city? The demand is strong, the supply low. And who could handle the work better than a man in full possession of his abilities, but with a lower energy level?

You never studied psychiatry, Doctor? Too bad. But don't give up hope and sob. You've spent—how many is it?—ah, yes, thirty-eight years healing the sick. Let your colleague, the full-fledged psychiatrist, instruct you informally and assign readings for a few months; and then you will go forth an able aide. Not a psychiatrist, of course. But an aide who can take over a vast deal of borderline work, and build up a new profession as you go.

A lawyer of independent means needs less advice from us than anybody else. And that is just how much he is going to get. American business is built upon law and lawyers. So is government. Between business and government, the lawyer who wants to enjoy his Best Years can pick and choose with regal insolence; and always he will find millionaires kowtowing to him.

He can turn his hand to many other things, too.

He can handle charity cases. He will find most Americans eager to become clients. Few can afford to go to law. As one lawyer told me: "Bankruptcy is a luxury for the rich alone." (He was making over a hundred thousand dollars a year in the field of bankruptcy, so he must have known.) Lawyers in other fields say pretty much the same thing.

He may also handle civil-liberty cases, if sufficiently broad-minded. Or he may handle work for charitable and civic institutions. One attorney who used to make more than the President of the United States now gives about a day a week to the legal aspects of cases handled by a charity organization; he is absorbed in evictions and foreclosures and desertions.

Must he make a little on the side? Then he may take up part-time real-estate work. His background fits him beautifully for that. Or he may handle occasional cases in which he formerly specialized, acting now as consultant for some law firm near by. Or he may handle research for firms too busy to do the work.

Best of all, he might become a neighborhood lawyer. In this field he will find little competition. For many years eminent jurists have urged young men to enter the work. As far as I can learn, though, the young are lured by the big city. Result: more lawyers than clients, more park benches than fees, hence more shysters and criminals. Before the war, France and Germany had only one lawyer for every 4545 people; but the United States had one for every 763, while New York City had one for every 378. Hundreds of poor devils were keeping alive by working part time as tutors or as waiters or as process servers.

On the other hand, hundreds of neighborhoods lack lawyers who can handle the simple routine of inspecting

insurance policies, arranging income-tax matters, drawing up leases, arbitrating labor disputes, collecting unpaid bills, and inspecting wills. All such work may be too little in volume and in rewards to attract a young man. But how about a retired lawyer who wants, let us say, to add a thousand dollars a year to his income? It strikes me as ideal. Above all, it meets the first strict requirement: You can do as much as or little as you like.

So I amend the recommendations of the New York bar, made just a decade ago. Instead of urging young men to set up neighborhood "legal clinics," I now urge the retired man. And I promise him that by so doing he will help break down the basis of the depressing belief of the common man that lawyers exist only for the rich and for the corrupt.

This is enough advice to give lawyers. But I shall toss in a Shining Example, free of charge. Her name is Dorothy Johnston and she dwells in Hollywood. No, this is no blurb for a movie star. It is sincere praise for a woman who used her legal skill to help the helpless, and in a novel way.

In her early forties, Mrs. Johnston passed her bar examination and became a full-fledged attorney. But she never hung out her shingle. She became too deeply concerned over the plight of thousands of women of small means in the Los Angeles area whom shysters and swindlers were defrauding. As you know, Southern California has long been the rallying ground for widows and orphans who believe they can live more cheaply on their tiny incomes in dwarf bungalows, ventilated through cracks in the walls and heated with parlor matches held between thumb and forefinger. Thither too have flocked older women who had a few hundred dollars saved up to provide for old age.

Most of these people hardly knew common stock from livestock. They couldn't distinguish red from black in a

balance sheet. They believed whatever a nice man told them, especially if he eyed them in amazement and asked whether anybody had ever told them how much they looked like some popular movie actress. So in moved all the suave crooks and started to clean the crowd out.

They sold stock in super-vineyards that would pay larger profits than Henry Ford. (See the famous Ramola Swindle.) They casually assured the suckers they wanted no money; just give them those green-ink papers down in the safety deposit vault. Thanks, sister. Then came the great Fig Swindle. Old scrubwomen put all their savings into orchards that never fruited a fig. Before long the shacks of the poor Bellflower section in the east end of town rang loud with wailing and the bread lines lengthened.

Then the women of the city got busy. Clubs organized hundreds of members into bands of investigators and out of all this grew the Widows' Protective League. To its program Mrs. Johnston gave five full years of hard, full-time toil, running down swindlers and building evidence against them to the point at which they either fled town or went to jail. A few, caught with the goods, gave up their plunder; but most of them used the stolen funds to pay their lawyers. This, you know, is one of the great advantages of being a crook: you use other people's money to pay your way.

City real-estate commissioners, aldermen, lawyers, and supposedly reputable businessmen conspired in the swindles and raked in huge profits, until the women caught them. And for a time, at least, Los Angeles became safe enough for any able-bodied man to walk the streets in daylight with not more than one automatic and a police whistle on his person.

Today, alas, Los Angeles has recovered from its fright. So has every other large city, not to mention a few thousand small centers. It hurts me to say this, but history must

out. About twenty-five billion dollars is now held by people who never had large savings before the war and who have not the faintest glimmering of the ways of swindlers. Every day in every way swindlers grow bolder and bolder. Read the fantastic reports from the Better Business Bureau, from the Department of Justice, from local police, from anybody in touch with these poor people of means. Did you know that they are taking crooks right into their banks, unlocking safety deposit drawers, and handing over Government bonds and hundred-dollar bills, in exchange for pretty wallpaper decorated with cats and dogs? Quietly slicksters launch corporations in states they control or at least can count on for immunity at a price.

It is very clever to remark here that a fool and his money are soon parted. True enough. But don't forget that nowadays the bankrupt fool steps whistling into the bread line and allows us to buy food for him. He then draws funds from Uncle Sam, to keep him going, not in opulence and ease, but at least well enough to perpetuate his folly. (See records on the sizes of families on relief.) So we all pay for the fool, in the long run.

We need right now at least a hundred thousand able lawyers who are eager to devote part of their Best Years to thwarting the immense army of scoundrels seeking to get that twenty-five billion. Where are the volunteers?

Counseling should attract the ablest men of industry and finance and business and government, as it attracted Bernard M. Baruch. It promises more for less than any other activity. More glory, more fame, more honor, more friends; and all won for less time, less energy, and less money than one needs to keep up with the Sunday paper's comic strips.

"Design is for the master, execution for the servants." Leonardo da Vinci said that, and well. Who can say it better?

A great architect should not lay his own bricks, nor a brilliant engineer rivet steel beams in his own bridge. In the heroic days of painting and sculpture, the giants never dreamed of filling in every square inch of their canvases or chiseling away all the marble from the block within which lay the artist's dream. Leave such foolishness to little men with little visions.

It is only the older man who has the judgment and vision of creative enterprises in the magnificent manner. (An enterprise, please bear in mind, is an undertaking of considerable importance involving the handling of men and materials, as well as whole situations, usually over a fairly long period. Writing a sonnet is not an enterprise any more than whistling a tune is.) Having energies inferior to younger men, the master again ought to leave the heavy toil of execution to his servants. And it is the mark of the great master that he can delegate such work. The little master cannot. And he loses the little greatness in him as he wastes his hours over little tasks.

It has often been remarked that the greatest executive is he who can handle his organization so well that he may at any time drop out, by choice or by necessity, without disturbing anybody or anything. Let every retired man keep this in mind as he plans his work after sixty.

Experience and wisdom are man's most precious assets in late middle age. If after half a century of living a man has not become worldly-wise, he never will. There's no fool like an old fool, but fortunately there is no wisdom like that which the years bring. When a fool retires, we leave him to his mellowed folly. But when a worldly-wise man retires, younger people would do well to seek his advice, and pay well for it too, if the wise man needs the money.

Time was when the young did this. Paul Ellerbe tells me

about his great-grandmother, one of the Alabama pioneers who founded Montgomery. Born soon after the War of 1812, she had known in her girlhood many men and women who had been born long before the American Revolution and had fought through those bitter years and then, in a free land, had struck out to the west and the southwest, to find new fortunes. Her background was that of the Founding Fathers. So as she grew old she counseled first her children and then her grandchildren and at last her great-grandchildren.

Around her fortieth birthday she went blind. For the next forty-odd years she sat in front of her open fire, in an upper room of her granddaughter's house, and at a stated hour of each day she discussed with each member of the large family all the problems of heart and purse. Would it be well to buy six new firkins for butter? Should Tommy go up to Louisville to sell the hams? What could be done with the old gray mare, now that she could no longer pull a one-bottom plow? Would it be better to take the corn money to the bank or to keep it in the old brass pot on the kitchen shelf, for ready cash? If Mr. Edwards did propose, should Sally reject him because he drank too hard?

So ran the grist through the ancient mill of her mind. The family did not always follow her advice. She was at times too "sot in her ways." Again, she would forget that steam railroads had displaced the old stagecoach that used to rattle up the pike. But not for one little instant did anybody cease seeking the old wisdom. The eyes were blind, but not the mind.

This was the old America, the old world that has gone, probably forever. Can any little part of that benign matriarchy be revived? I think so. I think that you retired men and women can revive it and improve it. If you do, it will deliver you from many a futile and lonely hour, too.

The young must live their own lives. I am the strongest champion of this philosophy, but I do not distort it. A man may live his own life and still learn wherever best. It will be his own life that he lives insofar as he makes his own final decisions; but before he makes them, he may read books, talk with strangers, go to college lectures, or sit down with some elder who has been through the mill and knows grain from chaff.

The evil of the ancient rule of the elders lay in the rule. They commanded. The young had to obey. But there is a wiser way. Let the old advise, let the young consider. When older men and women understand that they are only counselors, they will cease imposing their wills upon the young. When the young understand that their elders are not trying to boss them, they will listen more graciously. Here we find a better relationship between the generations than was possible in patriarchies and matriarchies.

America's most distinguished part-time counselor may well point up all the morals of this tale: Bernard M. Baruch, formerly a boxer, then a Wall Street operator, then a very rich man, and at length informal adviser to the men who were running our country. Immature people who write news stories have long made light of the park bench in Washington where this part-time counselor had the habit of meeting all those who sought his advice. No reporter, so far as I can learn, has thought of a certain historical parallel.

"The best college in the world is a log with the student on one end and Mark Hopkins on the other."

The best years of retirement may well be a park bench with a young man on one end and Baruch on the other. And the most fruitful hours in the life of many an ambitious young man may well prove to have been those he spent on Baruch's park bench. For there the elder statesman

put into words and plans of action the shrewd worldly-wisdom of half a century. And what a half century!

Baruch began his part-time counseling away back in 1916, when Woodrow Wilson appointed him to the Council for National Defense. This was in a purely advisory function. He was then too young—only forty-six—and too vigorous to check his impulses to action; so in 1918 he was running the War Industries Board. There he worked out the major program of economic warfare that proved so successful. After a lull, he went back to Washington to help the Government struggle through the great depression from 1930 and onward. Soon afterward, Roosevelt began seeking his advice on almost everything; and Baruch became, beyond all question, the outstanding counselor of the Roosevelt regime. (Harry Hopkins and Judge Samuel Rosenman were more than counselors, of course.)

Now seventy-six, this rare old man may go on for many more years doing his best to cope with the gravest defect in American life. It is the burden of routine toil that falls upon every responsible administrator and prevents him from thinking intelligently about his own most important problems. As several men put it to Arthur Krock recently: "Washington hasn't time enough to think."

I used to hear wise old correspondents at the National Press Club in Washington say this, in their own words and curses, after a hot day's work. I used to hear Cabinet members echo it. I understand that three Presidents since then have said it. Now Arthur Krock echoes it with a bellowing trail of statements, wails, and whimpers from statesmen high and statesmen low. Perhaps his report ought to be reprinted by the million and distributed among the eighteen million citizens of retiring disposition. For it serves as a solid foundation for a program to be followed by all intelligent and able-minded men and women past fifty-five.

In the *New York Times Magazine* for December 9, 1945, Mr. Krock says:

When . . . decisions must be made under heavy pressures, our system of government denies to most of its highest administrators sufficient time to think, and these definitely include the President.

There is no probability of a fundamental change in this respect.

When issues are grave but need not be settled quickly, freedom to think demonstrates its value only to those who have learned how to think, and these are not too numerous. . . .

The trade of politics . . . puts emphasis on instinct, resourcefulness and improvisation, and a lifetime spent in it deadens the mind to disciplined thinking. . . .

The Congressional system is an adverse factor. House and Senate will not consolidate hearings, officials are obliged to spend many hours before the [separate] committees repeating themselves.

One Cabinet member told me that he had appeared each morning and afternoon over five successive days at the Capitol, during which time four committees asked him the same questions about the same things. Meanwhile he was being pressed for a departmental decision on a matter of great moment which he could not satisfactorily make until he had read thousands of pages of a record. The result was that he came to his finding without mastering his subject, which duty demanded and a wise conclusion required. This happens every week in Washington.

Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson . . . "I have averaged nearly twenty appointments a day, beginning at 8:30 in the morning and continuing until 7:30 at night. Even then my calendar was not clear, for on three evenings I left my office to attend public dinners or to speak on the radio. . . . I seldom have more than an hour or two in the day to think through the problems that present

themselves, and this time is by no means concentrated. It generally consists of five or ten minutes between appointments."

Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal suggested a staff of civil servants to relieve administrators of their duties toward the newspaper and radio correspondents and toward politicians. He admitted that this might not work well, but it was his best idea.¹

Few Presidents have been able to find time to think. So national affairs are often administered by guesswork and compromise. The fault lies in the system. What can older people with time on their hands and money in the bank do about this?

Thousands might do as Baruch does. We have enough park benches. We must only find enough younger men to listen. Forrestal's suggestion of a civil staff to take over routine work is good as far as it goes; but the far greater need is not less routine but more counseling under conditions that prevent interruptions and induce calm. There is only one way to think: Get away from the office where telephones are always ringing and underlings walking in with notes and higher-ups entering unannounced to tell you the latest joke on Old Big Wig. Get away to some lonely spot. Sit down with an older man of wide experience. Tell him your troubles. Listen. Answer his questions. Toss birdseed to the pigeons. Give a passing tramp a dime. Unbutton your vest and stretch your legs. A relaxed body can take things in. A taut one is worse than a dead telephone wire.

Suppose that each of the most important hundred men in Washington had his own park bench or poolroom or motorboat. Suppose each could telephone any one of a score of retired businessmen, scientists, engineers, politi-

¹ Arthur Krock: "Washington Hasn't Enough Time to Think."

cians, and whatnot to come down to the secret rendezvous in ten minutes and be prepared to spend half a day. Suppose that each of these part-time counselors were to get a retainer of perhaps a thousand dollars a year, just to stay in the world's most unlivable city and to be at the Government's beck and call; and then perhaps an extra fee for services rendered from time to time. I will sign today a guarantee that the United States would save billions a year, have fewer strikes and lockouts, suffer fewer business depressions, and get into fewer wars than ever before. Money back if you are not satisfied.

This nation cannot survive half worked to death and half underworked. Let's free the slaves. And let's put the idle to work. I wouldn't stop at the revamping of Washington. I'd carry this Emancipation Proclamation into every factory, too. And I'd rub the nose of every executive into our printer's ink. For our great businesses and industries need part-time counselors as sorely as Washington does. We have abundant evidence.

One of the greatest and keenest of employers told us long ago how impossible it was to find younger men for the key positions. "There are not enough brains under fifty years of age to supply the management needed in industry." Henry Ford said this. He was then seventy-seven. He said that almost half of his workers were forty or older, and quite a few in their eighties (the oldest was then eighty-seven). He preferred older men, said he, because they always had better judgment, riper experience, and a deeper sense of responsibility.

What if Ford is right? How foolish we all are then to stop work at sixty or at sixty-five! We are just hitting our top stride, and then we quit cold. The whole American philosophy of work and success and schooling is wrong-headed. We keep children young as long as possible; then

we drive youths and young adults like slaves; and finally we fire the middle-aged as soon as they fail to hold the pace they hit in their thirties. The result? Infantile children who never lose their childish ways. Exhausted young workers and broken-down toilers in middle age. The scrap heaps of life piled mountain-high with men and women who have barely attained the peak of their powers. Moody, empty old age. Was ever a so-called nation more foolish? The historians cannot say.

If able men go on working after sixty, they must taper off. If they taper off, they best use their skills and their experience as part-time counselors in many cases. Between the overworked and the underworked we must create a new buffer state of wise men on park benches. They will save the overworked from their own sloppy and hasty thinking. And they will save themselves from a fate worse than death, namely, the boredom of the idle mind.

Let the Government take the best part-time counselors first. Let businessmen have second choice. There will remain opportunities for thousands of men and women in advising the executives of our thousands of nonprofit enterprises. What a variety of judgment is wanted here! A settlement house needs somebody to advise its leaders on a dozen matters every month. So does a Bide-a-wee Home. So does an old ladies' home. So does a church. So does a boy-scout troop. So do a multitude anybody might name.

From few can an adviser get pay. So the work can be done only by the lucky people who can afford to give part time free. Yet we have tens of thousands of such fortunate people, and many of them lie awake nights wondering how to spend the next day. At the same time the full-time workers in these many vineyards end each day exhausted and harassed. Once more I cry: "Free the slaves and put the idle to work!"

I think you may hear this rebel yell again.

Hundreds of men near the top of big businesses have little more time to think than the overworked Washington officials. They stand in need of older counselors, even though they will not admit it, out of fear of losing prestige. In time, though, they must call in the elders.

If they do not call soon, they may find all the elders busy advising young men as Ben Franklin loved to do in his Best Years. He did not limit himself to young men. He advised the elders too. He advised the Government. He played a part in the formative years of America that can scarcely be exaggerated. If Washington was the Father of His Country, Ben was its Grandfather. All through the second half of his life he applied his wit and wisdom and inside information to a thousand and one problems harassing statesmen. Name a man who used his Best Years to the better advantage to his fellow men.

In the year after the war many businessmen have formed volunteer groups to advise veterans who want to find jobs, careers, and opportunities. Men with no preparation for the work they want to do have been either trained or warned away. Men lacking capital have either been financed or been turned to fields open to men with little cash. All in all, the advisers have done a good job. But why stop?

Young people always need the advice veterans have been getting. They leave school ignorant of the real world and full of stuff and nonsense. To call their unaided efforts to establish themselves in business "free enterprise" is rather like using this sweet phrase to describe a gambler laying his money on a roulette wheel spinning in the dark. Most of them lose everything. And everybody else suffers. If we

don't have to support the bankrupt, we have to set him up again in business; and pretty soon we have to repeat the kindness. A man who has been wiped out through ignorance is hardly an asset to himself unless he learns to profit by his mistakes. And the faster some wiser man enlightens him, the better for all of us.

In every city we ought to find a small staff of part-time workers who have tapered off by taking over such advisory tasks. They should give their opinions only in fields they know. They should meet all young applicants, hear their stories, and then send them to the right advisers, some of whom may be retired and some active. The advice must not be flip or cursory or general; it must be personal, factual, and minute. Otherwise it would be the kind referred to in the old adage about the cheapest commodity on earth being free advice.

Here are important opportunities for at least twenty-five thousand able people past fifty.

If we furnish part-time counselors to government officials, business leaders, and young men about to start business, why not offer the same service to factory workers? Just what would it be? The answer has been given first of all in the electrical industry. It is "the moral equivalent of war."

A war brings out the best in most workers. How so? It gives the humblest a sense of immense importance. He who never got one kind word from his money-mad boss now sees on every billboard that his country needs him, that he must pull victory out of defeat by doing the best that is in him. He gets into a factory where everybody from the general manager down treats him like a soldier rushing up to relieve a hard-pressed comrade. The morale talks he hears show him a larger world in which he belongs and which he can save and improve. In short, he ceases to be

Number 56,722 in Dept. G, North Building. He counts now, he, John Doe of Elmhurst Avenue.

How carry this over into the peace years? Let you older people work away for an aeon or two over this delicate task. You can solve it. But not overnight. It is no easy thing to convince a man that he still counts as he goes to work on a little piece of alloy steel and finishes it for assembly later in a seven-dollar lawn mower that is sold by the trainload to a department store in India. But a gentle veteran can turn the trick. It's all in the personal approach. Let a worker understand that he is a person with a name known to his superiors, and that these men are thinking of him as a person. Let the part-time counselor get to know him and his family and his personal ambitions and problems. In time the "moral equivalent of war" will appear.

Workers need advice, but families need it more; and most of all do young people contemplating marriage. We all know how scores of influences have been breaking down home life, deferring marriage, reducing the number of children, and dumping on the public authorities the leavings of such ruin. Never before has there been such a stream of juvenile delinquents. In some cities there are four times as many as after World War I. Los Angeles has just broken its own record of broken marriages, with 177 suits for divorce, annulment, and separation filed in a single day. The whole country is doing its level best to catch up with Los Angeles.

Three multitudes call for help. The young who want to wed. The newly wed who want to part. And the old who have been left alone by their children and relatives. Each multitude calls for its own special counselor, who must have wide experience and much deep wisdom. We are fast moving toward a nationwide system of court counselors who handle one or more of these classes.

Milwaukee was the first to give its divorce court a marriage-counseling service. Its conspicuous success has led to the creating of similar units in Dayton, Toledo, and other cities. Perhaps this work appeals to you. Then get busy.

How prepare for such counseling? Dr. Paul Popenoe, Director of the American Institute of Family Relations, tells me that nobody can answer that question yet. He explains:

"Counseling is as much an art as a science. Many psychiatrists or persons with a Ph.D. in psychology or sociology are doing very bad counseling while much better counseling may be done by ministers' wives or the football coach or the YMCA secretary or the visiting nurse. Nearly all counseling is done by such persons."

What chance is there for full-time counseling? Dr. Popenoe says it is negligible. Most counseling, he says, will be done "by college deans, clergymen, family physicians and a dozen other categories of people. Many of these get a large part of their referrals from physicians."

All this strengthens the case for the part-time counselor. He doesn't want full-time work. Being well on in years, he can gain the confidence, first of physicians, and then of the people to whom the physicians refer him. He does not have to advertise for clients and thus run into the difficulty Dr. Popenoe reports, of advertising in ways the medical profession regards as "unethical."

The way to begin is to begin. Let neighbors know what you are going to do. Let your local newspaper editor understand it. Encourage him to write editorials about the need. Slowly you establish yourself. And you stop at the point that marks the limit of your energies and purse. In time, the city may pay you. But you'll surely start out as Santa Claus.

A woman may get her start most easily in the most neglected field of all. Call it "Lonely Hearts." Laugh at it, if you can't help it, but apologize meekly afterward. It is

one of the gravest responsibilities now confronting psychiatrists and welfare officials. The old homes have gone. Apartments are now built barely large enough for husband, wife, and a child. The grandparents have no place to sleep. Out they go. They find single rooms in the neighborhood. If the winters wear them out, they seek a warmer clime; and there they wander about, poor lost souls. Only those of us who have talked with them, sitting on a park bench in the winter sunlight, realize how horribly lost they are.

Some of them tell you how they were starving in the big city and came to this warm village to get three meals a day with the sunshine thrown in. Some tell you they couldn't endure being within easy call of their grown children and yet never being asked around for even a Sunday dinner once a month. Some tell you how, one by one, in a few years, wife died, child died, nephew was killed in Okinawa, brother went mad and was locked up, and six old friends moved away, leaving the old town a horror of silence and strange faces.

A businesswoman I know used to drive every morning down to the beach, spread a blanket out, and run over her day's work for an hour or two before going to her office. Letters, telegrams, and reports occupied her at first. After a week or two, people began to stroll down. They stood around and passed remarks about the weather and the war. Some of them sat down uninvited and babbled. Before they had finished, they admitted they were lonely. They wanted to talk to somebody. They had no friends within hundreds of miles. If they didn't talk, they'd go mad.

My friend was sympathetic. She invited a few around to tea. She found their tales all too true. They were Lonely Hearts. Age had stolen some friends, war others, and departure for California had removed them from the rest. My

friend formed a small group and left them to their own devices, more than content with one another's company.

She tried to return to her morning beach, but had to stop the practice. Too many other Lonely Hearts kept coming around.

Some people, most of them under forty, may think this funny. It happens to be one of life's everlasting tragedies. What can retired women do about it? How can they use part time, with or without personal gain, to help such lonely lost souls?

Many a newspaper publisher has learned, to his deep surprise, that he can gain more readers for his periodical by helping Lonely Hearts than by any other known method. A good columnist specializing in honest and fairly competent aid and advice to lonely men and women will gain a following that will make the sport fans look like a corporal's guard. What would happen to a professional counselor and friend of these people is easy to forecast: he would be swamped in short order.

As yet we have, so far as I can learn, only a few professional specialists in Lonely Hearts. But as our society matures, we are sure to have more and more men and women who will find in this work a useful, pleasant, and even profitable venture. To believe this, you need only recall a few facts like these.

Many of the millions past sixty are poor and with few friends, if any. Most lack inner resources that enable them to fill their hours excitedly. They shiver under the chill shadows of boredom and inertia. It is they who make life after seventy so unhappy. In time, we shall breed a race with few such unfortunates. Today we have them on our hands and must care for them somehow.

A clever counselor will find useful work for those who

can work and pleasant play for those who can only play. He will do everything he can to keep them within the stream of life. He will snatch them from the backwaters and push them out into the current, whenever possible.

Those who have toiled over people and their problems all through their active years will shine as counselors of Young Love, Broken Homes, and Lonely Hearts. I commend this part-time cause to former schoolteachers, nurses, doctors, judges, personnel managers, and clergymen. Most of all to clergymen. I am biased in their favor. For I have watched retired clergymen in action for lo! these many years. As I eye the sleek bishop sipping brandy in his golf club, I wonder whether there are still men in the world like Old Spouter.

Yes, there must be. Bad as the human race is, it cannot have sunk to the level of the bishop and his brandy.

I call him Old Spouter because the young clergymen around him gave him that name after we first met him in a restaurant one raw morning in the Connecticut Valley. We had come for an early lunch, he for a late breakfast. He had been up the river, filling in for a minister who was flat with pneumonia. Lean and dark, he looked like a Hindu. But he was a Scot of purest ray serene. He'd gone to India a young man and there had worked in the vineyard until the head office said: "Well done, good and faithful servant," and retired him on a pension large enough to keep him in porridge and cough syrup, in an upper back room of a dormitory at a theological seminary.

How he spouted! Strange tales from the hills in a strange eloquence. Tales about Bengal and Gujarat and the Punjab. His face glowed softly under the light of memories. But we hardly marked it, so rapt we were under the spell of the story.

It was strange and new and beautifully told. Old Spouter

could toss words around as a juggler tosses billiard balls. He had mastered English by teaching it to Hindus for twenty-seven years. The burr of his Scotch was a blossom. He had the uncanny gift of speaking according to outline; whatever he said seemed to proceed from some secret and well-cogitated structure. We had never heard anything like it.

Within another month Old Spouter was giving talks in all the churches about India. He did not beg for money. He did not extol the missionary. He told what people wanted to hear, and he told it magnificently. No oratory. Just that speaking according to the inner outline. Then he began to pay calls on the elderly and the sick in three parishes. The clergymen took him along and introduced him properly. From that point forth Old Spouter took over. Every Sunday he preached for some little minister out in the farm villages who wanted to get off for the day. He rode around in a buckboard. Farmers vowed they often saw him sitting astride the horse, shouting hymns to high heaven while the empty buckboard bounced over the ruts and stones. In time we knew this was true.

A man in town fell ill. His wife could not take over his little restaurant in the side street downtown. But Old Spouter could. For three weeks he cooked and served meals under a white apron. A Lutheran minister in the next town had to leave his German congregation for a Sunday, because of his brother's sudden death. Old Spouter delivered the most famous German sermon ever preached in the lands of John Wesley; the natives still speak of it with awe, I'm told. A professor of church history in the local seminary begged Old Spouter to fill in for a fortnight. Students told me that they hoped the professor would drop dead, in God's infinite mercy, so that Old Spouter might go on with the course.

After six months everybody knew Old Spouter was the handy man of the Methodists, the Congregationalists, and

the Presbyterians in four counties round about. He could play the pipe organ passably, though a few ladies tittered. He could preach in five languages and did so down in the factory town at the south end of the state, where workers of twenty races toiled. If there was anything he couldn't do, it was sitting still and watching the world go by.

Work never came to him. He chased it to its lair. He seemed to smell out responsibilities as hounds smell out rabbits. He would spend hours with us young college boys, explaining shades of meanings, the difference between Hindustani and something else, the reasons for the native uprisings in Bengal, and a million other matters our professors never touched on. And all in the easy ripple of casual conversation, with no show of learning. The man was as modest as a maiden, yet he had learning that confounded the encyclopedists. And he could outwork a team of mules.

I tell this little fragment of his story to show that men can and do retire forward. This strange old missionary went on with the endless little tasks of helping everybody in need of help until he was too frail to lean against the winter wind; and one day the wind blew him away. But he left behind the rare essence of his life. He was a man who went on living as long as he was alive; and he went on living because he had something to live for.

Whenever I look around me and behold the flabby, the gouty, the painted, and the witless aged sitting around querulously with nothing to do, I sigh for the return of an age that breeds men like Old Spouter. I might even accept his theology if I could get him back.

The part-time preacher can be one of the noblest of men through his long years of retirement.

I can think of only one part-timer who is as noble and far more urgently needed these days. Were I to speak my mind fully about the man and the need, I would be off on

another book. So I shall speak about a tithe of my mind.

This person may be man or woman, learned or unlettered, rich or poor, strong or weak, city man or farmer. He may have come from any place on earth. His English may be funny. But he must show one trait always: He must hate tyrants and paranoiacs of every stripe as fiercely as did Thomas Jefferson and must act instantly on that hate. He will not be stopped by the cowards who point out the perils of his course, nor by the bosses who threaten him with dismissal. In his heart he will know that freedom is about the only thing worth dying for, because freedom alone makes possible something to live for.

I hear bright-eyed young people saying that with the Nazis and Fascists defeated, the world can now be free forever. I heard that after another war once. I may live to hear it after a third. It is the simple man's wish fathering a simple thought. It is the everlasting lie that helps breed wars. It arises in the minds that imagine important gains in the affairs of men are made once and then forever. Such minds refuse to believe that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. They are child minds. To protect us all against such we must have, ever ready and ever equipped, a host of men and women who spy tyrants newly born and crush them before they gather strength.

Old men are said to make wonderful prophets of doom. Perhaps that is a function not to be despised after all. For doom is always just around the corner. Every good road to the Promised Land has a deep ditch on both sides. Every wild optimist like myself owes it to his cause to hire a first-class devil's advocate and to scan hard his daily report on men and affairs. He must know the worst about everything before he can plan the best. What kind of a sailor is he who sets his courses by the pretty white clouds overhead, ignoring the reefs that line the channel? I'll tell you: He is prob-

ably a simpleton whom some cunning power seeker has trained to look only at the bright side of things. Press him, and he soon will boast that he always sees only the good in people. Right there ask him to stop the boat and take you ashore.

Any society that spends much time preening itself, cooing: "How pretty am I!" spreading its peacock tail before spectators, and warbling: "God bless me!" is ripe for the tyrant. Caesar always knows how to flatter fools and so to make them join his ranks. Convince the titmouse that he is a raging lion, and soon this raging lion will be rubbing its nose against your shins and purring. All this is old stuff, so only old people know it. The young will have to wade through blood in order to learn it.

As I write, tyrants of a hundred stripes threaten us. Most of them are the same old rogues. For roguery changes little through the ages. Five centuries hence people will still be battling Hitlers. Peace lovers cannot prevent such monsters from being born; and, once born, they menace us all. Shall we give up, then? Why, no. We must merely organize earlier and better, to hold the monsters in check. We must find them and slay them young. We must never appease them. We are not dealing with nice people. We are dealing with cobras, with leprosy germs, with cancer cells. We are battling the forces of death. Shall we kiss the cold cheek of death in brotherly love?

Now to the task. What might thousands of you retired citizens be doing with part of your time? Every Old World clique has its agents in Washington and in many another city, working full time to peddle its cause, to buy legislators, to scare voters, to fool us all with fair tales about its own virtues. Perhaps a few of these outfits may show some merit. Perhaps others are far more evil than they seem. Who knows? Few of us. So it becomes a duty of older Americans

to keep an eye on each. Whenever anything crops up, let it be widely reported. And let everybody take due heed.

Few newspapers will publish such news. Our free press is really the Great Yellow Dog Show. Nobody takes it seriously. If news about alien cliques were printed on the front pages of most newspapers, few readers would bother with it. They do not expect "the low-down" there any more. So let our retired citizens open up other channels. What they ought to be, we may leave to those who deal with such problems.

Many men and women ought to go into politics, in order to watch for the rise of young Huey Longs and young Bilbos. Full-time work in politics is too hard, I know; but fortunately part-time work can serve almost as well. Five women can take turns listening to a hall of lawmakers and perhaps get more out of the bedlam than any one of their number might, just for being fresh. Fewer than a thousand observers might easily work out a system of relays to follow the proceedings of the Congress and work out a wonderfully accurate report from hour to hour.

In time, however, many of you must draw a deep breath, take an antiseptic gargle, and plunge into party politics, right at its source. For here is the source of whatever Government we have. You will never gain much by exposing tyrants after they have won elections. You must catch them in the act of gaining control of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. You must also do a far harder thing: You must undo the dirty work they have already done by way of making almost impossible anybody's setting up a third party to oppose the two old outfits. Slick lawyers long ago rigged laws so as to make a third party almost impossible to launch, to organize, or to finance.

Alien cliques long ago learned to work in and through the old parties. Today several have entrenched themselves

prettily. One fine day, our noble old guards of the two parties may wake up to find these aliens in full possession. And then what? I am not going to write a history of the next hundred years. I leave you with the thought.

Every man and woman among you millions who have grown old in America can find a place in this endless war to keep America free. Our supreme power, now evident to the dullest fascist, makes us the object of underground attack. The aim always is to capture our power and so to rule the world. Every power madman lies awake nights thinking up schemes to trick us into giving him some of our power. Be sure that within the next few years, all the stalest tricks will be revamped and tried again. If they fail, new tricks will be devised. New slogans will be trotted out. New issues will be cooked up. New appeals will be made to our nobility, or to our generosity, or to our imbecility. Of course, our noble suckers will receive medals and honors and appointments to alien institutions. The Royal Eagle of the Fourth Order of Bessarabia will still glitter on Alderman Ed Psychml's broad chest at the annual reunion of Loyal Bessarabians; and it will make it easier for him to vote to give the next sewer contract to his three good Bessarabian friends. Isn't brotherhood wonderful?

Where will you be when that sewer contract is awarded?

To Keep Fit

THE first hundred years are the hardest. Which are hardest within that perilous century? The first two years of retirement. It is this cruel span that frightens many people as they face it. Why?

It is then that they have to change, in a short period, the largest number of old habits. Breaking any habit is a shock. Breaking several slight habits is a strain. Breaking the strongest life habits proves too much for many frail spirits.

Recall the men who retire from Lloyd's of London? They live only three years after the day they close their desks and leave the office. Those who have lived happily into their seventies took jobs in shipyards. This is in line with the gloomy experience of many American banks and other corporations. Their officials have told me, over and over, that the hardships of readjusting to a new way of life overcome some of their ablest pensioners, and almost always disaster comes within two years, if ever. Those who weather the mortal storm come out on shining seas under blue skies.

So we must, as we close these studies, face the question of the great shock. It differs profoundly from all questions having to do with enjoying your Best Years. For the bad spell precedes these. You are traveling toward the Promised Land of whose milk and honey I have been singing, perhaps too shrilly. Between that land and where you stand

lies the Slough of Despond, a morass undiscovered by Rand McNally. Before you move a step, you must inspect yourself and your equipment.

Are your shoes sound and easy for the hard going? Is your water bottle filled? Have you a raincoat? How about DDT? Where's your hatchet? Did you wind your watch and set it? It is a self-inspection of this sort that we now outline. You and only you can do the self-inspecting. Do it well and act according to findings and I promise that you will come through the critical days with nothing worse than a few bramble scratches and a blister on your big toe.

Beginning with the first day you retire, set up in a conspicuous place the list of things I am going to give you now. Run through it at least once a month. Spread the self-inspection throughout the month, so that you do not have too much to do on any one day.

Ask yourself about each matter referred to. If in doubt, ask friends too.

1. Do people irritate you when they ask you to do something, however trivial or easy?
2. Are you complaining about little things more than you used to?
3. Do you feel too self-satisfied and complacent about everything?
4. Do you spend much time sighing for more security and an easier life?
5. Do you shun risks, even little ones?
6. Do you find it hard to change any of your habits, even trifling manners?
7. Do you place great trust in your own personal experiences and scorn the opinions of other people?
8. When left alone, do you find it hard to start doing anything on your own account?

9. Are you more interested in personal gossip than you used to be?

10. Do you criticize young people much?

11. Do you lack enthusiasms?

12. Do you feel no thrill or excitement, even in situations that thrill and excite people around you?

13. Do you find that you start conversations and propose to do things less often and with less enthusiasm than you used to?

14. Do you prefer companions of your own age?

15. Do you bitterly resent criticism?

16. Do you grow anxious often, and over small matters?

17. Are you becoming more of a "fuss-budget"?

18. Do you withdraw from activities on the plea that you are too old?

19. Do you dislike meeting strangers?

20. Do you often feel that you have nothing to look ahead to?

21. Do you indulge in self-pity?

Be sensible. You are you. Many young people show some of these traits, and middle-aged people show many. You know how many of them you used to show before you retired. Take that as your yardstick. If you find the traits are commoner now than ten years ago, watch your step; in that case they indicate that you are aging. Do something at once to stop the Man with the Scythe.

You may find some of these questions hard to answer. But the next one will be easy. It is a most important question, and luckily one about which you need have no doubts. You can check up on yourself with mathematical accuracy.

Are you eating more than you used to? (Let that include drinking too.)

You didn't know, did you, that many of the bad habits in the long list just set forth lead to overeating and over-

drinking? They do. Especially difficulty in changing your habits, unwillingness to start anything on your own when left alone, lack of enthusiasms, withdrawing from activities because you are too old, having nothing to look ahead to, and all the hundred little boredoms that grow out of inertia and lack of interesting work.

Women seem worse than men. But both sexes overindulge. They consume far more than their bodies can use up. The surplus turns into fat. Fat presses upon the arteries and veins, thus making it harder for the heart to pump blood through them. And so, in time, the overburdened heart gives up.

Watch your dinner plate with a hawk's eye and a saint's conscience. Watch your cocktails and your gin. An empty mind makes a full stomach. And a full stomach makes a full coffin.

Now a word about a few common phases of the blights we have listed.

Consider the first five, the eighth, the sixteenth, and the seventeenth questions in the list. The irritations, complaints, inertia, and anxiety all spring chiefly from that overloading I have talked so much about. Your engine is 10 horsepower, but it is trying to handle a 12 horsepower job. No wonder it overheats and puffs smoke.

If you find yourself reacting thus, there is just one thing to do: change the load. Now you may do this in many ways. Understand the tricks and you will soon be serene. You may spread the load over a longer time, so that you are not overstrained at any given moment. I cite the simplest example: once upon a time, I loved to walk five miles an hour; then I dropped to four, and much later to three, my present average velocity except on hills, where it can't be above a mile an hour. I learned, fully ten years ago, to regard any request as a pure engineering project. If it called

for work above a certain amount, I respectfully refused to take it on. I did not hold the job against the proponent. So I ceased to be irritated when a youngster asked me to run uphill. I just do not run up hills, any more than water does. This is a law of nature around my neck of the woods. So how can I take it personally?

This engineering attitude beats all the philosophies and moral systems as means of preventing emotional outbursts over such things as overloads. If only some genius would write a complete moral system based on sound engineering! What a world this place might be!

No engineer expects a 10 horsepower engine to carry a 12 horsepower load. But how many other people insist upon trying it for Auld Lang Syne or because the boys from the office want to play golf on the Fourth of July? The impulse to do what others want, or expect of us, leads to impossible ventures ending in misery or worse.

Complaining about little things often begins in the same way, but so subtly that you may find it hard to analyze. Too many little tasks in the course of a day may add up to an overload by sunset; and there you are back in the same bad engineering. Or many of the little things call for skills slightly beyond you, so that you potter over each too long, using up too much energy in spite of yourself. Thus again back to the same old overload. Slowly you build up a resistance to such trifles. And your complaining is the first stage. Come to understand this and the remedy will be easy.

After fifty, people need sound human engineering more than anything else. Say that over to yourself about a hundred thousand times in the next year. That may fix it in your mind. And you may say it often enough to believe it, too.

Consider the ninth question and make sure you do not

misconstrue it. You may grow more interested in personal gossip as you grow older, without suffering much thereby. It depends on what you do with the gossip, after you get it. It also depends on the kind of gossip you seek and purvey. Older people commonly tend to center their thoughts on themselves. They become more completely individual, as a reaction against their middle years of living borrowed lives on jobs.

Idle chatter about neighbors is bad. Careful inquiry as to people in trouble, or causing trouble, may be wise. See to it that you carefully criticize your own gossiping. If it gets anywhere, all right. If it is the foolish whispering of petty scandal, snap out of it.

Do you sulk and gloom whenever you forget the name or the address of a man you met a week ago? Or whenever you forget the instructions for reaching somebody's house? Do you mutter to yourself: "I'm growing old. My mind is failing"?

Snap out of it. You haven't caught up with the times.

Don't be disturbed over your growing difficulty in recalling recent things. After sixty, it is normal. Indeed, it is inevitable. But it does not mean what most people imagine it does. Even our best psychologists have missed its significance.

There's a sound reason for older people recalling recent matters only half so well as earlier. All functions involving attention and interest follow the broad pattern of Weber's law. The larger the stimulus, the weaker the effect of each increase in it. When it starts at nothing and increases to something, it shocks us most, relatively.

So with the total moving mass of experience. It has arisen out of millions of stimuli since birth. As the mass grows, the effect of each new stimulus weakens. Sit in total darkness

for an hour and you may then perceive a firefly half a mile away. Stare into the noon sun for even five seconds and you'll not be able to see your own house burning down before your eyes. After you've been alive for only a year, you perceive the next minute as your grandfather perceives a month. After you've been around for a century, you perceive the next month as you used to perceive a minute.

So too in matters of judgment. After you have observed a hundred bolts of lightning strike a hundred large trees, you cannot be surprised at the 101st bolt hitting the 101st tree. After having seen a million apples fall to the ground, you cannot react with a shout and a rush telegram to the Associated Press when you see another. Earlier experiences acquired meanings. The latest do not add anything new. They merely fit into old judgments. They arouse no new thoughts. It's the same old apple falling from the same old tree to the same old ground. The stimulus is objectively the same; but within the field of your judgment it is nothing at all beyond a ditto mark.

I should suspect a man of seventy who reacted to all the little experiences of his recent years as a young man would. He would probably be infantile. He could not have learned much in the first half of life.

Older people cannot be deeply interested in recent events, for most of these are ditto marks. I object then to the common practice of construing poor recall of recent events as a sign of senility. It is more likely to mean that an older man has grown up and refuses to notice ditto marks. What you refuse to notice measures your wisdom quite as much as what you notice. The more you learn, the more you overlook, because it contains so little that you do not already know. Everything excites a baby. The full stomach craves no food. The full mind craves no facts. The less you know of the world, the more you notice in it, which is quite as it

should be. Suppose you noticed everything all the time? You'd have no time and no energy for anything else. And then who would pay the household bills on the first of the month?

Do you avoid sports, games, jaunts, parties, clubs, and other activities because you feel inferior to the younger people with whom you will have to associate? You must rid yourself of this nonsense at once, lest it poison your Best Years. This is a vile habit fixed upon you by the free-enterprise system. The philosophy of competition must yield to a mellow and kindlier one. It is fine for gorillas but rotten for people. Pity the successful businessman who has kept everlastingly at it to win success.

Before fifty he is always struggling to be the best in every activity. He has been bred to success and needled into top achievement. All men may be equal, but by gosh he is going to be better than every rival! After fifty, he steps down. He no longer bosses clerks around. He is no longer head of a college department. Retired, he sinks into the gentle mists of obscurity. The deepest of his attitudes is thus outraged. He who once lorded it over all is now nobody. After a while the rage passes over into a depression. Yes, he is nobody. So he will hide his incompetence from everybody.

Ministers who have managed parishes, teachers who have handled classes, captains who have commanded ships, and scores of other high-grade people fall into this evil state. They must understand that they can get out of it only by getting out of the philosophy that makes the mire. It is the philosophy of competition. It glorifies the few who come out on top and ignores those at the bottom of the bloody heap. It is honey to the big ego and gall to the little. Whatever use it may have in the struggle for existence, it is worthless and even harmful to those who have quit that

struggle. To carry its customs over into the Best Years is like applying the murdering tricks of the Rangers and Commandos to the old friends one meets in Main Street after the war.

Before fifty, did you go in for active sports or play? If not, study your physique minutely. Find some sport that does not exhaust you and does not call for faster muscles and keener eyes than you have. Break yourself in gradually. Never overdo. If you cannot enthuse over the pastime, at least take it grimly as good medicine. In time, you may like it. Little boys like spinach, you know.

After fifty the typical American is troubled. He lacks amateur spirit and amateur urges, as many observers have pointed out. He prefers to listen to music rather than to play it, to watch a baseball game rather than to play baseball. He is a fine spectator, but a bad performer. Now this may be all very well during the hot years when he is busily making money. But after he tapers off, he finds time heavy on his hands. What can he do? If only he had the amateur's urge!

What has blighted it? I think I know the answer. It is the same old philosophy of free enterprise, with its corollaries about competition. Young people avoid playing games they cannot win. For winning is their sole pleasure, not playing. In college they are trained in the philosophy of Knut Rockne: "A man is no good at all if he plays football because he likes it; he's got to play to win, to be worth a dime. If he can't win, out he goes." No wonder our students prefer sitting on the bleachers and watching the trained gorillas.

After fifty, intelligent people taper off in the long battle to lick somebody else and come out on top of the heap. So they ought to shake off the silly habit of sitting on bleachers just because they can't play down in the mud with the gorillas.

Do you spend all your time on just one favorite thing? Do you hold to a rigid routine? Does even the slightest break in this routine annoy you, or upset you? Then set out at once to loosen up. Make it your first duty. While a simplified life is good, it can be overdone.

I said this book ought to have been written for readers between six and fourteen. Here's one of the strongest reasons. It is the overcentered life.

This is a life too powerfully focused upon one matter. It is a dreadful danger, especially for people after fifty. But we can do little to help overcentered people of fifty. We can offer them palliatives, nothing more; and often these help little.

A life may become overcentered on almost anything pleasant. Hence the mad variety of sufferers. One is overcentered on a sweetheart, another on a political cause, another on wealth, another on power, another on glory, another on contract bridge, another on the old home, another on a pet poodle, another on violin playing, another on tobacco, another on whisky, another on religion, another on the movies, and so on and on. In all of us there may be a latent monomania. In too many of us the disease breaks out early. We become single-track minds and single-track bodies. We come to the track's end, and there we end up in a smash.

In youth, many murders, suicides, and robberies spring from minds overcentered on lovers and their devotion. In age, crimes and lesser follies spring from all sorts of shocks caused by the loss of the love center and life center. Unbalance is often nothing more than offcenter. And people get offcenter as a result of losing center. So we must revise the education of the young at once. We must train them to find a wide scatter of strong interests. We must warn them

against placing too much affection and zeal and faith in any one thing. For in time the thing will pass, or else it will appear less worthy of affection; and then what will the over-centered person do? He will be left high and dry. He will have nothing to live for. At fifty, this can become a mortal peril.

Train all children to find pleasant things to do in widely separate fields. Train them to use all their nerves and muscles variously. If nothing more ensues, they will at least come into their Best Years more supple and more broad-minded and more eager for new things.

If no longer young, train yourself twice as hard to this same end.

Have you been deeply discouraged of late over your failure to learn well the lesson your teacher in an Adult Education class assigned? Are you about to quit the course because you are too old a dog to learn new tricks?

Well, here's the good news. I couldn't have passed it on to you five years ago, for nobody had then discovered one of the oddest features of memorizing. Here it is in tabloid, with many trimmings cut off.

Smith learns fast. Jones learns slowly. For two months after learning, Smith retains what he learned much better than Jones does. Then a strange thing happens. Our fast learner now forgets. Our slow learner begins to recall what he couldn't bring back earlier. In the end, the slow Jones has a memory much better than the fast Smith.

Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

Never again say that you can't learn new things. Say only that you learn them slowly and so will learn them better.

Adjust your affairs to this law. Never agree to learn anything quickly. Tell people you learn slowly.

Never try to learn anything important unless you have first sold yourself on its importance and then sold yourself on yourself. If incentives lack, nothing happens. So sell yourself on the Best Years of your life and on your own powers to enjoy them. Take everything I have here said more seriously than you ever took your old business.

Now It's Up to You

WE REST OUR case.

No youth in ages past ever looked ahead to the future you now face. Within your lifetimes, the world has progressed more than in the previous million years. The climax of revolution came with the smashing of atoms. It is up to you to prevent anticlimax. Anticlimax will be any return to the poverty, dirt, disease, superstition, and tyrannies of the Pre-Atomists.

Millions of men and women past sixty now enjoy better health and vigor and worldly wisdom than did the best youths and men of earlier days. The Century of the Uncommon Man is here. Being full of life, people are now free from fear. For fear thrives only in weaklings. Being fearless, people will try bold ventures. They will discard the old and seek the new, which is always the better.

For the first time, bold men may say with Monte Cristo "The world is mine!" For the first time men can drop their office work and turn to worthier ventures. All the world's routine can now be handled by a fraction of available workers. Only tradition binds most people to their desks after sixty. For the first time, also, most of us can quit, relax, and have all the fun we want while we can still enjoy the sea, the flowers, the song of a bird, and the laughter of children.

Into this strangely thrilling world of the atom you are going to retire, fortified with much new knowledge about

yourselves, your interests, skills, and habits. Although the new science of human nature is not nearly so far developed as atomic science, it offers enough to smooth the road for many a one who, only yesterday, found it bitterly hard. In tapering off long before final retirement and in seeking your future within your own past, you will surely gain much. And the world will gain more from your following all your wishes, giving such time and energy as you can to each, from frothiest frolicking to the grave business of keeping America free.

A book is a lot of words somebody puts together to tell readers what is on his mind. No book ever made anybody do anything. This one is not going to be the first book to break this long record. If anything is going to be done, you must do it.

It's now up to you.

Once upon a time there was a great clown whose antics won all hearts. He played before full houses in every large city of the world. Having amassed a fortune, he at length retired.

After a year of leisure he grew restless, then bored, then melancholy. Friends pondered his case. They remarked that he had never laughed in all his life except as a clown, clowning it before the footlights. So they despaired of cheering him up.

While they were holding council, the ex-clown wandered through the streets. He came to a theater where his former company was appearing. He bought a ticket and went in.

Ushers marked him sitting alone after the theater had emptied. They went up to him and found him helpless with hysterical laughter. Tears rolled down his cheeks. His diaphragm couldn't stop twitching.

The theater press agent rushed up and asked the old master which performer had made him laugh thus. (He saw a wonderful blurb in it.)

The old clown managed to gasp: "You never know how funny this world is until you get out of it. I was laughing at the people laughing at those old gags."

He then died laughing.

A football game is one thing to the player and another thing to the spectator on the bleachers. It is one thing to the radio fan, sitting at his receiver as the broadcasters report the game, and another thing to the city editor who is wondering whether he ought to give the story a column more or a column less space.

The whole business of living takes on different aspects for all of its players and a wholly strange one for those who retire from it and then look back upon it. Bulwer-Lytton said that a man with a retiring disposition was endowed with an extra sense. He sees everything in a way one cannot with the ordinary senses. Of course, it is not an extra sense literally, but it comes close to being one. It is a radically new perspective.

I dare not set this up as a reward for all who retire. Only those who enjoy thinking are likely to win it. Philosophers and scientists find their late years the happiest of all largely because of these startlingly fresh experiences. They enter a new world. So what once may have been grim now becomes rather amusing. What once was commonplace is now invested with a unique quality. It is as if after having looked all of one's life at the bright side of the moon, one were to whiz around it in a space rocket and observe its dark side, all covered with immense live cities built of green cheese.

It's up to you to cultivate a retiring disposition to the

point at which you too can say what George Santayana has just remarked, at eighty-two: "I have never been happier in my life than now." This is the wisdom of the well-lived life.

